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THE WOOING OF MARCUS

By G. B. Burgin

LADY FITZGIBBON PINES

ADY FITZGIBBON was bored; but, then, that was nothing new—most things bored her somewhat portly ladyship. Fitzgibbon, when alive, had bored her; since his untimely taking off in the hunting-field, she had been bored more than ever.

She leaned back in a cozy loungechair in her blue-and-silver boudoir, and that bored her also, for she had chosen blue and silver, not because she liked it-her own complexion and tastes ran to yellow—but because "Ouida's" heroines—she was interested in "Ouida's" heroines for the time being-always made a point, irrespective of their complexions, of being surrounded by blue and silver. Most of the people in her own station preferred quieter surroundings-old oak and faded tapestries. Lady Fitzgibbon, however, had been reading "Ouida" because Miss Smythe had told her to read "Temporal Power;" if she had been told to read "Ouida," she would have declared that "Temporal Power" was the only book that a cultured woman could by any possibility tolerate. But, on this particular Autumn evening, she threw "Ouida" under the sofa, and began to pour out the tea. It seemed to her that, after reading "Ouida," tea was inadequate, unless supplemented by fiery liqueurs; and she did not like fiery liqueurs.

"Take your tea, Enid," she said, handing her friend and companion a cup. "I sha'n't read 'Ouida' any

more.''

"Why not? Try 'Idalia."

"No." Lady Fitzgibbon shook her

handsome head. "'Ouida' exacts too much from one's emotional powers. Besides, she makes me feel as if I wanted to ring the bell and order Russian princes to bring me sacks of turquoises and things."

"You know very well it would be of no use; but you are so stolid. Com-

pared with you, a brick wall is ro-

mantic."

"I don't see what romance has to do with it. You've only to wire to town," said practical Enid Smythe—her one flight of imagination was to call herself "Smythe" instead of "Smith"—" and order a jeweler to send you down some."

"Are you under the impression"—Lady Fitzgibbon thoughtfully poised the Queen Anne sugar-tongs in her white fingers, and admired the effect of the lamplight on her rings—"are you under the impression that jewelers keep Russian princes for sale?"

"No, I'm not; I meant turquoises."
"But who is to pay for them?—the turquoises, not the princes."

"Your trustees. What are trustees

for if they cannot pay?"

"You have been dipping into 'Ouida,' too," languidly remarked her ladyship; "that's why your eyes are so red. Don't you know that trustees, although they are such sticks themselves, always look upon it as a personal injury when you ask them to cut down timber?"

"But I never do ask them."

"No; you're the sort of person who would never have any timber to ask about. I have."

"You have a very handsome in-

come—almost as handsome as your-self."

"It all goes in keeping up the place,

and in keeping me down."

"Well, you can't both be equally well preserved. Let the place go down, and keep yourself up."

"Ah, but you forget Pepworth. It must be unencumbered when he comes

of age."

- "You need not follow the estate's example, unless you choose. Well, if you indulged in such a luxury as Pepworth——!"
- "Lux—" Lady Fitzgibbon was shocked. "Pepworth's not a luxury, he's an incubus, though I am so fond of him. Besides, he's twelve, and makes me feel old. Your ideas of luxury are so quaint. If it weren't for him, I shouldn't be so hard up. Another cup?"

"No, thanks. Marry again."

"Marry again! What for?"

"Money."

"But there would be a husband attached to it."

"Attach yourself to the husband;

that's the usual thing."

"Don't permit yourself to be humorous. If you go on like this, you will become a middle-aged epigram. Besides, it is fatiguing when one has to think it all out and explain to you what you really mean."

Tall, lean, sandy-haired Miss Smythe stood on the rug before the fireplace. "Now, you're spiteful. It is just as well we have been friends in youth, or

we should quarrel."

"Oh, no, we shouldn't; we can't afford it. You are as indispensable and

as fiery as Worcestershire sauce."

"Well, don't shake me up so roughly, or you'll get the cayenne on the surface. Why don't you wish to marry again? 'Is it for fear to wet a widow's eye'?"

"No, it isn't. If it became necessary, I should descend even to 'wiping' a widow's eye—the other woman's. Stick to 'Ouida,'" said her ladyship, crossly. "You know very well I didn't cry much when Fitzgibbon was—"

"Translated? Oh, well, you see, I knew him."

"So did I. That was why I didn't cry much."

"Better marry again," insidiously suggested Miss Smythe.

"Why?"

"A woman like you is much too handsome to run to seed."

"How dare you!"

"You're two years younger than I am. I'm forty-five. That leaves you----"

"I don't look it," protested her ladyship. "I defy you to say that I

look it.'

"You will soon," declared the remorseless Miss Smythe. "Besides—" She hesitated.

"Well?"

"You're growing selfish. If you were to marry again, I shouldn't get it all."

"Get it all! I don't understand."

"Your selfishness."

"Oh-h! That's it!"

"Yes, that's it. You invited plainspeaking. There it is—as plain as myself."

Lady Fitzgibbon became remorseful. "I suppose I am. Perhaps, I should be all the better if I had a man to bully me."

"Oh, no, you wouldn't!"

"You are always unjust when I have a momentary fit of humility." Lady Fitzgibbon took some more tea. "Why shouldn't I be all the better for having a man to bully me?"

"Because you would bully the man," declared Miss Smythe, putting her hands behind her back in a very gen-

tlemanly attitude.

"Ah, well, perhaps I should! Now I come to think of it, I am a little tired of living at Templehurst. But who is there to marry? Pepworth tells me he will be very critical if I present him with another parent. He says he wishes somebody who will go with the estate! Who is there around here to go with the estate?"

"The duke."

"Thank you; nursing is not my vocation."

"The marquis?"

"I'd rather marry the-"

Miss Smythe hastily mentioned Sir Harry Pettigrew. She was only just in time.

"All soul—a mere dreamer."

"You will lend body to him," suggested Miss Smythe.

"Don't be disagreeable. I can't

help growing stout.

"You don't take enough exercise."

"Something at luncheon must have disagreed with you." Her ladyship again began to show temper. always go too far."

"I repent. You know very well you are thinking all the time of my sug-

"Perhaps, I had better marry a commoner. It would really be more distinguished. Find me a commoner some one with money; some one who will draw cheques without asking questions; some one who is a gentleman; some one who will never be in the way when he isn't wanted; some one who would do as he is told. Where can 1 find such a paragon?"

"In the next world." "Then, that's hopeless."

"If I smoke, I may be able to help

Her ladyship hastily tossed Miss Smythe a silver cigarette-case. Smythe took it, critically. "I detest these scented things," she said, lighting a cigarette; "it looks as if you were afraid of the tobacco."

"So I am," confessed her ladyship, hurriedly. "I do it only because every one else does—for the appear-

ance of the thing."

Miss Smythe began to relax. turquoises would match your monogram better than these pearls; the silver makes them insignificant."

"Put the case in your pocket, and

keep it.'

"Ah!" Miss Smythe gave a little purr of satisfaction. "Now, you are really penitent. After all, you and your tobacco are not as bad as I fancied. What were we talking about?"

"You know very well what we were

talking about. Have you some paragon up your sleeve?"

"Heaven forbid!"

"You know there is some one you wish me to marry."

"Of course, if you marry, there must be some one."

Lady Fitzgibbon half rose. "No; I won't shake you; too much trouble. Who is it?"

"Don't call him an 'it.' Now that we've come down to commoners, there's no one nearer than Alton."

"Alton!"

"Yes, Alton. The lord of the manor dates from the Conquest. He has six thousand a year, whereas your jointure is only fifteen hundred. Much more can be done with six thousand than fifteen hundred."

"Yes; elementary as my arithmetic is, I know that. But what has fate done to Marcus Pendragon, that he should be afflicted with me?"

"Ah, you must settle that with fate —and Mr. Pendragon. That's your

"But he is such a queer creature! His Norman blood is as thin as himself."

"He's a gentleman; weak, but lovable."

"And he's always covered with chemicals," declared her ladyship, betraying every symptom of disgust. She began to laugh. "You make me as vulgar as yourself. He would do all the blowing up on his own account -with the aid of his chemicals."

"It's a pity you don't recognize the border line between wit and vulgarity," acidly declared Miss Smythe. "If I were in your position and could marry Marcus Pendragon, I'd be the happiest woman on earth. He—he's a shambling old Galahad." She drew out the cigarette-case from her mannish pocket, and lighted another cigarette. Her hand trembled a little as she

"Lead him to the shambles yourself. Marry him. I make you a present of him.

"Thank you; he wouldn't go well with the cigarette-case. He is a man who could not live without sympathy.

I am as sympathetic as a—as a trustee."

"You are." "And poor."

"Oh, rubbish! A human tonic like

you can't be poor."

"Tonic! That's why I'm so bitter." She puffed with recovered composure.

"You can always share in anything

that's going."

"And I'm much more an old bachelor than an old maid," declared Miss Smythe.

"Then you give him up to me?"

"I give him up to you."

"Why?"

"Oh, if he married you, I could see that you treated him decently. too much of an angel to have his feathers pulled."

"Come, now, don't joke. Wasn't I an angel to Fitzgibbon after he——?"

"Yes, you were. That's what annoved him so much—and the—the other."

"What did?"

"Your taking it so quietly when he ran away from you. If you had been fiercely indignant, he would have been much more penitent. When a man has been a villain, he wishes the fact to be properly recognized. If you tell him he has been a very ordinary villain, after all, it is a shock. wound his pride. He feels commonplace."

"I dare say. I haven't your theo-

retical experience."

"Thank goodness, I haven't your

practical mind."

"If you aren't nice to me, I shall go back to 'Ouida.'" She made a move as if to look under the sofa

for the discarded volume.

"I am very nice to you. I know you are unhappy, that you like Marcus Pendragon, only you haven't the honesty to say so. Why are women so dishonest?"

"A woman in my position can't

afford to be honest.'

"A woman can always afford to be honest—except at fifty. Come, now; Pendragon is just as good a name as Fitzgibbon—better, in fact." "'The woman tempted me, and I

"Call," suggested Miss Smythe. "We'd better go over to Alton to-morrow, and find out how your dreamer is getting on. When I see his clear-cut features, I feel that smoking is vulgar."

"Then, I wish you saw them more You're quite shameless frequently. in your preferences. Shall I have to do all the wooing?"

"Of course."

"And propose to him?"

"That is equally a matter of The man is much too shy course.

to do it himself."

"You understand Mr. Pendragon so well, I really think you'd much better marry him yourself. I'll give you half my fifteen hundred, you bitter-aloe kind of woman."

Miss Smythe looked at her, criti-"Why, you haven't enough to pay your bills, as it is! You think you would, but you wouldn't, not in cold blood. Besides, even Marcus Pendragon couldn't fall in love with with an outline."

"You are rather mannish," admitted Lady Fitzgibbon; "restless people always are. Do you really mean we had better go over to Alton

to-morrow?"

"Of course, I mean it. There's that new Paris hat of yours; wear that. You look well in it, although

it isn't paid for.'

"As if he would know a Paris hat when he saw it!" scoffed Lady Fitzgibbon. She was moved by a sudden impulse of pity for Miss Smythe. "I've always had the pleasant things of life, and you haven't."

"You've had to put up with Fitzgibbon. Do you call him a pleasant

thing?"

"N-not when he was alive. Death has sanctified his memory."

"Yes, death is a very efficient disinfectant."

"Wasp! I'm sorry for you."

"Don't waste time pitying me. I won't be pitied. Ever since we met Mr. Pendragon at the Flower Show, you've been a different woman. The day he lunched here, you were almost girlish."

"I don't care. There's no harm in my wishing to marry the man. Why shouldn't I have a little romance, even though——?"

"You are forty-three. Well, we'll go over to-morrow. There's an orchid house; that will do. Don't you like orchids?"

"Yes—when they don't get mixed

up with politics."

Miss Smythe surveyed herself with disdain. "It is time to dress. What is the use of it? I'm so thin, even dress cannot express me."

Lady Fitzgibbon gazed after her. "I'm a wretch! The mere fact of her wanting him, makes Mr. Pendragon the more interesting. Besides, why shouldn't I go to Alton to see his orchids? He never knows anything about them himself. A man should always discover beauty with the aid of a beautiful woman. I wonder whether he is as lonely as I am? Heigho! After all, it is better to have a bad man to worry over than to lead the placid life of a sheep. Fitzgibbon did keep me occupied. I never knew when he was going to break out. There is a great charm in the unexpected, however shocking it may be."

She rang for her maid.

"Oh, Parker!"
"Yes, m'lady."

"Couldn't you make Miss Smythe look a little stouter?"

"No, m'lady."

"Not if you were to try hard?"

"No, m'lady."

"Ah, well, then it's hopeless! Get the black-and-amber ready."

"Yes, m'lady."

"You're quite sure about Miss Smythe, Parker?"

"Yes, m'lady. Couldn't do it if I tried for a week."

"No, I suppose you couldn't;" and her ladyship became thoughtful again. Perhaps, that mature cynic, Pepworth, would not approve of Mr. Pendragon as a stepfather. For one

so young, he was very fixed in his ideas.

II

AN EXPERIMENTAL BACHELOR

Rough weather often accentuated Dr. Hawtrey's enjoyment of a good dinner. On this particular evening, the dinner was especially good, because Marcus Pendragon had indulged in one of his usual accidents, brought about by an attempt to discover the undiscoverable; and the very elements themselves had been moved to tearful pity by his inevitable failure. So had Marcus's cook, who was always haunted by the fear that every mouthful might be his last, and, accordingly, strove to surpass herself with each succeeding meal. Her creed was that, though all men must die, it need not necessarily be of indigestion; that Providence, although firm in dealing with mortals, is not unnecessarily harsh. She feared, however, that, owing to his partiality for chemicals, her master would die in his boots, or in fragments of them.

Impure chemicals have the complicated temperament of a woman, and are equally impatient in their method of rejecting combinations of which they do not approve. That morning, Marcus had started out, full of hope, to boil some picric acid in a crucible supported by a piece of wire gauze on the top of a tripod. As he carefully regulated the flame of the burner, and watched the acid crystals beginning to melt, he dreamed of the future which awaited him in the scientific world if the experiment succeeded. As cattlelifters, his ancestors had done well; now that New Zealand beef was so cheap, there was no glory in cattlelifting. He wanted to make a name as a great chemist. But it is difficult to retain a living interest in chemicals if you are careless. Marcus had not allowed for the possibility of impurities in the picric acid, and, suddenly, with unexpected violence, the whole mixture exploded.

Hence Whipple, the elderly butler, on going into the laboratory to call his master to luncheon, found him stretched, almost insensible, under a bench, and concluded therefrom that the experiment had been on the verge of success, Marcus, on the brink of eternity. Accidents of this nature were part of Marcus Pendragon's daily work; they varied the monotony of chemical research, and kept Whipple on the alert.

Warned by past experience, Whipple had provided himself with a clothesbrush and needle and cotton. repairing external damages, he led the limping Marcus back to the house, and plied him with good things to keep up his strength. There was a special "accident soup," into which cook always put all she knew; and Whipple, a gill of sherry. Marcus, too shaken to eat, swallowed a plateful of this soup, and slept for the remainder of the afternoon. Consequently, with the exception of a pain in one leg, he was little the worse for his most recent experiment, and deluded himself into the belief that his old school-fellow and chum, Dr. Hawtrey, would notice nothing wrong with the wounded limb, although it throbbed and burned unpleasantly, with a hole in it the size of a crown piece. It would have throbbed with greater intensity had he known of Lady Fitzgibbon's designs upon him.

The two friends sat facing each other, as they had done, on an average, twice a week for the last twenty years. Dinner over, they were rapidly attaining that Nirvana of easy digestion, when the outside world ceases to influence even its most ardent votaries, when it suddenly occurred to the doctor to launch a bombshell at his whimsical host, the unsuccessful experimenter—a bombshell which interfered with the natural processes of digestion, and robbed the walnuts of all their flavor.

"Upon my word, Marcus, you're as thin as Miss Smythe. Why don't you marry?" asked the doctor, abruptly, putting down his empty glass, and looking at Pendragon with the solemnity assumed by our best friends when becoming unpleasant. It is always our

friends who, by mere force of contrast, start us on the upward path of loving our enemies.

"What for? You don't want me to grow any thinner, surely?" Marcus Pendragon was surprised. "You might as well ask why I don't get buried. My sister Priscilla never comes near me, because she has a theory that a lord of the manor ought not to remain single. As if it were any business of hers! She says she won't set foot in the place again until I am married. The conventional morality of women concerning marriage is the most immoral thing about it."

"I think you ought to marry. You ought not to be a sort of 'Last of the Barons,' you know. You are always inventing and converting things to strange uses. An experimental bachelor like yourself suddenly transformed into a married man, would be interesting. These ancestors on the walls must think you a bloodless sort

"Rubbish!" hastily ejaculated Marcus. "A complete, self-contained bachelor is the noblest, because the most unconscious, work of woman."

of creature."

"Besides, you'll never be buried as a whole if you go on with those confounded experiments of yours, and there's no one handy to patch you up. They're too—"the doctor paused for a suitable word—"too disintegrating. Talk about a 'self-contained bachelor'! Why, it will take a whole county to contain your fragments, if you're not careful. You'd be all the better for some good woman to look after you and act as a wholesome irritant. There's Miss Smythe."

"A sort of feminine mustard-plaster? No, thank you, I'm too thin-skinned already. There'd be nothing left of me."

"Ah, I didn't mean that. A mustard-plaster would be with you only a few, fleeting moments; as a rule, a wife stays either for her life or yours."

"Then, give me the plaster. Irritants are endurable for a little while, but not for a lifetime. To marry would be the strangest thing of all;

and yet millions of men have lived through matrimony, and have pretended to like it. Must be a conspiracy on their part. Wonder why they're such humbugs as to lure other men into the same trap!"

Marcus Pendragon raised his glass, and thoughtfully regarded its ruby light. "When I think of matrimony, it recalls the Book of Tobit, or any other of those outside-society books of the Bible; one means to study it some day, but there's no hurry. I've always had an idea that a desire for matrimony, like appetite, is created artificially, by bitters."

"One must swallow something; and you have swallowed the wine of life—in moderation, I grant you; but you haven't swallowed the elixir of matrimony, which has the choicest bouquet

of all."

"Choicest bouquets always make everything else unpleasant—by comparison. Do you think, my dear fellow, they'd mix well?"

"What would?" The doctor grew testy. "You seem to think men and

women are mere chemicals.'

"No, there you're wrong, Hawtrey. 'Pon my word, you're wrong. They're not chemicals, but, as a rule, they're as combustible as that infernal picric acid:

"Man is fire, woman is tow, The devil comes and begins to blow."

Now, I'm not combustible; I don't want to be bothered with a wife. I'd rather drink the wine of single blessedness. It doesn't run the risk of getting 'corked' by matrimony."

"Disgraceful! You're such a fossil! Look at your ragged buttonholes."

The doctor grew personal.

Marcus Pendragon refilled their glasses. "Oh, if you're going to buttonhole me into matrimony—"!"

"You're as forlorn as the last leaf on the bough, the last shilling in the purse, the last man who doesn't know how to get gracefully out of the Room of Life."

Marcus smiled, philosophically. "Room of Life, indeed! I expect to

be blown out of it some day. There's an exit for you! Anything else?"

"Yes. It's a shame this beautiful place should go to rack and ruin for want of a mistress. You are also going to rack and ruin for want of a wife."

"Glad you didn't class me with the house!" Marcus chuckled. "I haven't time to bother about studying women or falling in love, which I take to be only another form of indigestion. Besides, there's always Dodds, the house-keeper, to have an intermittent eye on things."

"Dodds! Who's to keep an eye on Dodds? She drinks like a fish."

Marcus pulled out his tablets. "It's strange, your saying that. It has often struck me that such a saying wants investigation, if only from its inherent falsity. Pishes drink water; Dodds drinks alcohol—largely; water would kill her. She's already got an enlarged liver, or one of those things that one hears about but never sees, except at an inquest."

"Pish!"

"Eh?"

"Tush!"

Marcus regarded him with impressive dignity. "Be more articulate, man. Don't 'pish' and 'tush' because you are fairly cornered. I'm not a patient."

"Cornered! I don't wonder. Why,

you're all corners!"

"Mere vulgar abuse. Your arguments aren't nearly as searching as your medicines."

"But, look here, Marcus."

"Well, I'm looking."

The doctor gazed, from beneath the shelter of rugged brows, at his delicately featured friend. The dreamy experimenter with picric acid looked very much like a human stork whose moulting plumage was stained with grease and chemicals. On the other hand, the doctor was fat, forty, energetic, something of an optimist. "So cowardly of you, Marcus. You're getting on to the time when men begin to think of the next world, and you're not even married. You call yourself

an experimenter, and yet daren't

marry!

"I don't call myself names—leave that to you. What has matrimony to do with it? How can being married help a man to think of the world to come?"

"How? Oh, you know nothing—nothing at all. I'm surprised at your ignorance. A bachelor has no right to be comfortable. Do you think the animals would have gone quietly into the Ark if they hadn't been allowed to do so in couples?"

"Well, I'm not going into the

Ark."

"Besides, Marcus," the doctor's voice grew very solemn, "it's by way of a—a purgatorial preparation—makes a man serious—cling less to earth. You're only forty, though your hair has turned. Still, you ought to have some religion in that thin carcass of yours. When a man's forty, it's indecent not to believe in something."

"I believe in you."

"I'm not a religion, I'm only a habit. Better believe in a wife—the neighborhood expects it; it's unfeeling to disappoint your neighbors. The man who daren't give his neighbors something to talk about ought not to be allowed to talk about them. Besides, you've but to look at the scheme of creation to see the consistent Intelligence behind it. It's an insult to your own intelligence not to grasp the order of things; that's the reason why most agnostics are such an untidy lot. They don't know how to place anything properly."

"Oh, if you're going to harass me with the Christian superstition, very That's better than wanting me to marry. As a bachelor, I have a little heaven of my own, and know where to find things when I leave them about. As a married Christian, I should probably waste most of my time in stoking what the rector calls 'cleansing fires. Fuel of that sort is expensive—to the stoker. There's a Frenchman in the library—such a cynical old beggar!—age didn't make him think of the next world—who says that marriage is the disunion of hearts

which frees two souls from illusion and fetters their bodies."

"Nasty beggar!" The doctor grinned. "That sort of stuff is all very well in books, but not for real life. It won't wash."

"Wish I hadn't to, either; takes up such a lot of valuable time."

"You're a more pronounced hum-

bug than ever."

Marcus nodded, as if the question were not worth arguing. After fishing his chum out of the deep waters of wild student life, he had established that rackety individual in the village of Alton, about twenty miles north of Marcus was lord of the manor, and camped out in odd corners of the great Elizabethan manor house. As lord of the manor, his entire ignorance of, and indifference to, the duties of his high office grieved Hawtrey, who thought that Marcus, instead of giving himself up to inventing unspeakable things productive of equally unspeakable smells, ought to take his proper place in the county, marry, and go to church regularly. On the other hand, Marcus seldom went to church, and never married; he owned a liking to all sorts of explosions save domestic ones.

The doctor frowned. "Look here, Marcus; before I go to Canada, I want to see you comfortably married."

"Well, you needn't go to Canada. I've plenty of money. Help yourself. You know very well I always sneaked your pocket-money at school. The compound interest alone would amount to a considerable sum."

Marcus hobbled to a desk—there seemed to be something increasingly wrong with his right leg—pulled out his cheque-book, and threw it on the "Observe the beastly ostentatable. tion of wealth, Hawtrey. Give up this Canadian scheme, and stay in Alton. I can't live here without you. The cellar would go to the dogs, and I should go to the cellar. If you leave here, you'll force me into matrimony and be responsible for the melancholy consequences. A man's friend ought not to thrust him into the open arms of an enemy."

The doctor walked across the room, replaced the cheque-book, locked the desk, and brought the key back to Marcus. "Put it in your pocket, simpleminded innocent. I don't want your filthy lucre. I have enough of my own to buy a small farm, and shall combine agriculture with medicine. Remember, I've four girls to grow up in a new country. If the next child proves to be a boy, he'll have a much better chance out there."

"Why can't the girls grow up in England? There's room enough. We're not turning England into deer forests for mushroom millionaires."

"Why can't they? Oh, it's evident you haven't read the statistics of the population, males versus females. By the time my girls are grown up, there won't be enough husbands to go around; and every nice girl ought to marry, as a matter of course; it enlarges her sphere of niceness."

"Is it necessary? We can't all in-

dulge in luxuries."

"Luxuries! Is it necessary! Of course, it's necessary. A woman without a husband is as colorless as a new meerschaum."

"I always thought matrimony ended in smoke," said Marcus, who had never given the subject a moment's previous consideration, but resented the doctor's attempt to lure him into the happy haven of marriage.

"You know nothing about it. Of course, every girl ought to marry. That is why I want my girls to begin in a new country. Even you will not deny that a woman ought to be happy."

"Then, why should she marry, my dear fellow? why should she marry? She's going out of her way to look for trouble—simply going out of her way. My own impression is that a woman would rather make herself unhappy in a search for happiness than have the miserable consciousness of being perfectly happy without thinking about it."

"Ah, now, we're coming to it." The doctor crossed his legs, and leaned back more comfortably; "now, we're coming to it. No woman is really happy

unless she has a secret sorrow. She may think she's happy, but she isn't; it's a delusion."

"Well? Didn't I say something

just like that?"

"Stay a moment. If a woman is unhappy because she has nothing to be unhappy about, she ought to marry, for a husband always becomes a grievance—it's the force of hereditary transmission—and generally gives her plenty of worry."

"Yes, that's all very well—from the wife's point of view; now for the husband's. Doesn't matrimony make

him unhappy, poor chap?"

"Oh, well, that's what he's for—to be the cheerful slave of a charming wife; his grievances don't count. The time is coming when, to use an expressive Americanism, woman will not only own the earth, but also the fence around it. Man will have, as a matter of course, to put up the fence for her to sit upon. Like a hen, woman's holy mission is to sit; and man must not ruffle her feathers in the process. Besides, it is always a good thing for us to realize our inferiority to the other sex. Robbie Burns knew that:

"'Auld Nature swears, the lovely dears Her noblest work she classes, O; Her 'prentice han' she tried on man, And then she made the lasses, O!'

"What? But this is dry work. Whipple, some more port."

III

MARCUS HESITATES

HAWTREY tried the port, then doggedly came back to his point. "What will those chaps on the wall think of you, Marcus, if you don't marry?"

"Rubbish, Hawtrey! I don't care what they think. They're only paint and canvas, and can't think. The duty of matrimony is the Sunday-school nonsense you married men get dinned into your foolish ears by equally foolish married women. You never will look at the other side of

the shield. Schopenhauer says that the nobler and more perfect a thing is, the longer it takes to mature. Man arrives at the maturity of his physical powers and mental faculties at twenty-eight, a woman at eight-That is why she remains a child all her life, never seeing anything except it is just under her nose, cleaving to the present moment, taking appearances for realities. Furthermore, what do people mean by calling that undersized, narrow-shouldered. broad-hipped, short-legged, argumentative race, the fair sex? A man, as a matter of fact, is always better proportioned than a woman.

"Schopenhauer! Bah! The fellow could never have seen a sweet English or American girl, or he wouldn't have talked such balderdash. But don't drag him into the discussion. Fortunately, he long ago, the miserable, jaundiced,

skinny-legged pessimist."

"How do you know he was skinny? Where's your authority for such a statement? You say it only because I'm not fat.'

"My authority?"

"Yes, your authority."

"Oh, I'm sure of it. Fat and fun go together; so do skin and sin. -I feel it."

"Oh, if we are going to argue from

our feelings!"

"People seldom do anything else." After all, they are generally the best guides. Now, Marcus, old fellow, take my advice, and get married before the night comes on. Then, I can leave you with a clear conscience. You know what a helpless old duffer you are without me."

Marcus looked at him, affection-"If you wait until I marry you won't go at all. Why should you? What's Canada to you, or you to Canada? It has got on very well without you all these years; but

how am I to do without you?"

"That's partly the trouble. rely on me for everything, in spite of the lickings I used to give you." The doctor did not think it necessary to add that Marcus often made things unpleasant for him by this dependence. It was not nice to have people coming to him to intercede for them with Marcus, when they wanted something to which they had no right. And he was tired of Alton; its sleepiness palled upon him. He had his girls to consider. In a few years, there would be no future for poverty, portionless but pure," within the British Isles. After the first wrench of leaving Alton, Canada was capable of infinite possibilities. And there was always the chance that, if he continued to drink Marcus Pendragon's port two or three times a week, it might become a confirmed habit—a habit of which he would be unable to rid himself; and, when the vengeful Fates snapped the thread of life, the wails of his spinster daughters would reach up to the next world, and worry him. Unlike Marcus, he believed in another world, and wanted to be comfortable. Hence, his determination to "pull up stakes."

"I'd gladly go to Canada with you, if it were not for my experiments,' "I daren't scatter said Marcus. picric acid around a new country. Besides, if I were blown up in so large a place as the Northwest Territory, I might feel too lonely to come down again. Why should I be 'cluttered up' with responsibilities at my time of life? They would only prevent me from doing more for the human race in the abstract."

"Because it is the duty of every man to undertake certain concrete responsibilities, when he is in a position to do so; and you are in that

position."

"I have my experiments. I can't go in for a fresh branch of them."

"They'll certainly diffuse, not only you, but your reputation, all over the world, if you are not more careful. Besides, they won't bring you your medicine---'

"Thank God!"

"-or smooth your dying pillow. I'll trouble you for the port.'

"As a doctor, you ought to know better than to talk such commonplaces. I don't think that I particularly want my 'dying pillow' smoothed."

"Nonsense! Why not? It's the correct thing."

Marcus grew fidgety. "It may be correct: there's no denying that it's expensive. People who smooth dving pillows always expect a commission on results. If I make a will, it shall not contain legacies for folk who have been punching one another's heads for the privilege of smoothing my dying pillow. Besides, when people are really dying-they die, you know, not the pillows-they don't trouble about anything of the kind. All their physical sensations and mental powers are at so low an ebb, that, fortunately, they cannot realize the smoothing process, or they'd get irritated to such an extent that they simply could not die. As a matter of fact, they wouldn't let even a hedgehog smooth their pillows. No, we sha'n't want you any longer, Whipple"—Whipple had silently entered with the coffee-"and will stay here. Fetch a table up to the fireplace, with a chair on each side of it. Have they brought in any more of that green ash from the spinney?"

"Green hash? Yes, sir."
"Then, bring it here."

Whipple piled green ash boughs on the smoldering logs, and filled the old, oak-paneled room with a delicious fragrance. After arranging the fire to his own satisfaction, Marcus sat down on one side of it with his coffee and churchwarden, the doctor reclined in an easy-chair on the other, a decanter of port and a briar-root pipe at his elbow.

Outside, the Autumnal wind blew, moderating its tone with well-bred decorum, through the stately beeches at the back of the manor house—a tone becomingly modulated for the ears of the rich. Further up on the hillside, before reaching the heath, it blared and blustered along cottage

rafters, and blew cold misery upon the peasants below. Around the manor house, it formed a pleasantly subdued and deferential chorus to the conversation.

Marcus leaned back, a quaint old Turk's-head tobacco jar on his knees. He carefully filled the churchwarden, using his long, stained fingers as a stopper with which to ram home the tobacco, and lighted it with a live coal from the fire. "Nicer than matches," he said, with a satisfied puff. "Sweetens baccy to light it in this way."

"There's nothing like a woman's fingers to sweeten one's baccy," said the doctor, dreamily, for the generous port had made him reminiscently "In fact, sentimental. sweeten most things they touch. It's only when they won't have anything to do with us that we rail at them. That's what makes us so angry when we try to get on without them, and realize that it can't be done. It can't be done. They must have their pretty fingers in every pie, bless them, or it isn't worth the baking."

"But if you don't care for pastry?"

"That's no proof it isn't good for you—in moderation. The things we don't care for are often those which would make our happiness, if we only knew it. But what on earth were we talking about? Oh, yes, you really ought to get married, Marcus. You owe it to your God, yourself and the county. Besides, it's an insult to the beneficent Creator, who made you lord of the manor, to go about looking like a lean, unhappy scarecrow."

"Fudge!"

"It's not paying your debts."

"Matrimony is a debt more meritorious in the owing than in the payment. Don't harp, man; don't harp."

"You'll never get a chance of harping in the next world if you don't reform. Try life from the inside, instead of shivering on the brink. You don't know what life is until you're married."

"Don't I? You married men always remind me of the once wild elephants which employ all their energies and blandishments in the capture of their free brethren. How dare you say I'm shivering on the brink, when you know I'm doing nothing of the sort! I tell you, I don't want to marry. You might just as well say I sha'n't know what death is until I'm dead. If you can't argue better than that—oh, have some more port."

"It would give me a lot of pleasure to place your first man-child in your arms before I go away. There's noth-

ing like it in heaven or earth."

"If you did, I'd drop it. Don't be

so—so premature."

"When I'm gone, you'll want some one to take my place. No one can live utterly alone, without going mad or marrying his cook. I shouldn't like to see Mrs. Dodds lady of the manor; it would make your mother turn in her grave, and your sister Priscilla fill the universe with the glad tidings. You know very well, you old stone wall, you'll miss me tremendously."

"Of course, I shall. Did I say I

shouldn't?"

"You must have some one to yarn with.

" ' How oft, how late,

We twain have talked the sun adown the skies.'

Ah, those Greek chaps knew the feeling. What was there they didn't know! It's odd to think I sha'n't end my days in Alton, but Policeman Fate has ordered me to move on; I must leave you and—this." He glanced around the oak-paneled room. "Wonder whether in the New World I shall find another chum like you, crotchety old human firework that you are. When the years make you shaky—you seem very fidgety to-night—

"'As a decrepit father takes delight
To see his active child do deeds of youth,"

so will you want an active child to help

you with your experiments."

"No active child for me, thank you. He'd blow me up," said Marcus, but a little less stubbornly, for the doctor's talk of departure had shaken him.

"Nonsense, man, it's easy enough to get married. Why, you have only to ask and to have. What woman in her right mind would dare to refuse the lord of the manor! You could clap her into prison. It's part of your old seignorial rights."

"That's the worst of it—a battered

old hulk like me."

"Battered old fiddlesticks! Why, man alive, you've lost only a finger and a lock of your hair."

"Oh, but there's a hole in the calf of my leg you know nothing about. I believe I shall limp for the rest of my days."

"Hole in your leg! What! When

did you do that? To-day?"

"Yes; forgot about it till just now. That's what makes me so fidgety."

"Forgot! Well, I'm—" Words failed the doctor; he jerked the bell furiously, instantly becoming the keen professional man. "Whipple, bring me a basin of warm water, and get the instrument case out of the gig. Your master has had another accident since I was here the day before yesterday."

"Accident, sir? Yes, sir. This is to-day's—pickled acid, sir," said Whipple, respectfully. "Only two last week, sir; but it don't last, it don't last."

Marcus deprecatingly waved his hand. "Sorry I said anything about it. Leg does feel a bit stiff, though. Picric acid blew me up just before luncheon, and something stuck in my calf. Seems to be swelling a bit. It's awkward. Lady Fitzgibbon's sent to say that she's coming over to-morrow."

"Swelling! I should think it is. You'll be the death of me." Crash went the doctor's pipe, as he seized an instrument from the case, and slit down Marcus's trousers leg. "Good gracious, man, there's a piece of cloth still sticking in it!"

"Yes, I thought you'd find something in it. Better leave it till to-morrow—tie a handkerchief around it."

"Better leave it till to-morrow! If you leave that piece of cloth in it till to-morrow"—the doctor dexterously extracted it—"I won't answer for the consequences."

"Oh, what would happen?" Marcus continued to smoke, with the insen-

sibility to pain of a wild Indian.

"Oh, all sorts of things—inflammation, suppuration, annihilation, probably. You're no better than a big baby. I don't leave this country till you're married; that settles it. If you're going to kill yourself by inches, you'll want a fresh rib in order to prolong the process a little."

He bandaged the wound, motioned to Whipple, who looked on, full of concern, to take away the basin of water, and filled a fresh pipe. "Now that's over, let's talk again. Put your leg up on the chair—so. That's right.

Now you're comfy."

The green ash burned slowly, spurting out its sibilant sap from time to time in little gusts. "Woman," said Marcus, with the air of one delivering the concentrated wisdom of ages, "is like that flame; she burns up a man, takes all the sap out of him."

"But look at the fragrance she extracts from him in the process! How she makes a new man out of the ashes of the old! Besides, you don't know what you're talking about; I do. must be going now." He knocked the ashes from his pipe, and stretched him-"Better come over self with a yawn. to dinner on Friday; we've asked Miss Frere to meet you. It's a good thing I remembered about it. Before you come, though, get Dodds to sponge your coat—wants it badly. By the way, Marcus"—he paused on the threshold—"got any of those trousers buttons you invented—the ones with prongs to push through the cloth and clinch inside?"

"Heaps; but what do you want with them? Hasn't your wife learned yet to sew on buttons?" There was a suspicious twinkle in Marcus's bland blue

"Of course, of course. You've forgotten there are all those girls to look after."

Marcus forbore to reproach his friend with inconsistency. His leg pained him; he wanted to think. He was certain to feel lonely if the doctor left Alton: there would be no one to talk to in the evenings, after the ardor of the day's chemical research had evaporated. In spite of his surface skepticism as to matrimonial felicity, he generally wandered into the doctor's nursery once or twice a week, with incongruous offerings of beetles and hedgehogs, of sweets and dolls, Mrs. Hawtrey, in the meantime, keeping an apprehensive eye on his pockets. He would miss the children - oh, yes, there was no doubt about that. In youth, the human animal is so interestingly frank. Had not the eldest girl most carefully cut his hair for him the last time he called at the doctor's? She said that the ends would do to line her squirrel's nest. It would be pleasant to make squirrels' cages for little girls of his own. It would be—pleas ant—to— He began to nod; the pipe fell from his mouth.

Seeing that Marcus was fast asleep, Hawtrey stole away to tell Whipple to look carefully after his master. "And have the carriage around in plenty of time to bring him down to the village for dinner on Friday. My gloves? Thank you. Mr. Pendragon is so busy inventing things that he may forget all about it. Why doesn't he get rid of Dodds? She's bringing the place to rack and ruin."

"Ah, sir, we want a mistress badly. It takes all the 'eart out of me to see

no one notices my plate."

The doctor nodded cheerfully as he got into his gig. "Keep on cleaning it, Whipple; keep on cleaning it. Where there is family plate, there will the Woman be also."

"What did he mean by that?" asked the wondering Whipple. "'Where there's fam'ly plate, there— Where there's—'Oh, well, I'll give it up.

I'm not paid to think."

As the bay mare dashed down the drive, frightening the somnolent sparrows in the ivy, it suddenly dawned upon the perplexed Whipple what the doctor meant. With a delighted grin, he shook his respectable fist at the door of the housekeeper's room, for he had groaned under the bibulous tyranny of

Mrs. Dodds so many years that the mere thought of a lady coming to rule at the manor house cheered him greatly. Heartened by this hope, he awakened the sleeping Marcus, and helped him up-stairs, for the leg was rapidly growing more painful. Once up-stairs, he lingered to tuck in his master's blankets.

Marcus called him back as he was leaving the room. "Should you think matri—ugh!—mony a risky experi-

ment, Whipple?"

"It can't be worse'n some experiments, sir." Whipple looked at him with covert meaning. "There was that one when you hurt your finger, and burst the water barrel, and singed the cat, and set fire to the gardener, and——"

"Ah, yes! What a beastly memory you have for trifles. Good night." Marcus dived beneath the bed-clothes as Whipple turned down the light. If these experiments were not conducted with more discretion, it was evident that he himself would leave the world piecemeal. As his leg grew worse in the night-watches, the doctor's advice began to fructify. He found himself dreamily murmuring:

"O woman, in our hours of ease, Uncertain, coy, and hard to please."

Then, he grew sleepier and mixed his quotations:

"'But seen too oft, familiar with her face, We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

He dreamed that he was marrying Mrs. Dodds, and that she choked him with a veal pie of her own cooking. When he awoke the next morning, the sun shone brightly, sparrows twittered underneath the eaves, his leg was less painful. "Marry!" he said, sitting up in bed and ringing for Whipple; "marry! Any fool can find another fool to encourage his foolishness. Not if I know it!"

IV

THE HUNT BEGINS

WHIPPLE was radiant. "This is what I calls living up to the fam'ly,"

he said, as he began to prepare for the luncheon party and polished his plate with renewed vigor. "Shouldn't be surprised if I let master have some of that special 'ock, if he goes on like this. My! but her ladyship's a wunner! Looks so filling and comfortable, too!"

Mrs. Dodds thrust a bibulous nose into his pantry. "Take away that red danger signal. You'll set fire to my wash-leather, if you come any nearer," said Whipple, with meaning.

Mrs. Dodds hastily withdrew her flaming proboscis. "Never mind my nose. What's up?" she demanded, with concentrated ferocity; "what's

up?"

"Lunching will soon be up," retorted the joyful Whipple; "and, unless you mend your ways, Mrs. Dodds, you'll soon be down."

"Shall I? Me, down! We'll see about that! I've been here a good many years, and I mean to stay here a good many more. Lunching parties, indeed! Who's coming to lunch?"

"Who's coming? Why, Lady Fitz-gibbon and another lady. They're go-

ing to look at the orchids."

"Orchids! No one's been to look at those nasty things before. Give me geraniums—in a red pot; they're more respectable. The ladies want to spy out the land, Mr. Whipple; that's what they're coming for."

"Let 'em come," retorted the undaunted Whipple. "My conscience is as clean as my pantry. You go and look after your own doings, Mrs. Dodds. Your mats won't bear looking under."

Mrs. Dodds hastily disappeared.

"Now, I'll go and catch master"—Whipple folded up his wash-leather—"and put him into his new clothes. Only this morning, when I handed him his trousers, you could see through them. 'Tain't respectable. A rook was going to perch on him as he went down to the laboratory. The poor bird took him for a scarecrow, and I don't wonder."

He went down to the laboratory, and

cautiously opened the door, then hastily withdrew, handkerchief to nose. "To think as a gentleman, with six thousand a year, can let a smell like that come near him!" he said, with repressed feeling. Then he put his head in again. "You'll excuse me, sir?"

"No, I won't," snapped Marcus.

"Go away; I'm busy."

Whipple coughed, discreetly. "You told me to remind you her ladyship's coming to lunch, sir."

"Lunch! Ladyship! Lady who?" "Lady Fitzgibbing, sir; and the

other lady.''

"But I'm just in the middle of an extraordinary combination. This acid is too dangerous to leave."

"No, it ain't, sir," said Whipple; "'armless as a baby. The doctor took away the acid, and buried it."

"Then it's like his impertinence!

Why?"

"He said he didn't want to bury you, too, sir. That's fuller's earth, that stuff you've got now."

Marcus was too indignant to laugh. "Well, if I'm not to do as I like in my own laboratory——"

"If you please, sir, the doctor promised to bring it back after Friday, or I wouldn't have been a party to it."

"Friday! Why Friday?"

"You're to dine with him, sir, and he don't want no accidents meantime."

"Oh, very well, then." Marcus picked up a retort, and began to be oblivious of Whipple's presence.

"New clothes spread out on the bed, sir," suggested Whipple. "If I may be allowed to express an opinion, sir, you won't know yourself in them."

"Clothes! Bed! Whose bed? What clothes? What are you waiting for?"

"The ladies will be here, sir, in half a nour," said Whipple; "and I've got to valet you, sir. Your fingers is stained dreffle, and you've damaged your shirt cuffs."

Marcus suffered himself to be lured back to the house by the persevering Whipple. His new clothes certainly looked very nice, when he straightened himself up and forgot to stoop. Whipple put a rose in his buttonhole, and stepped back to study the effect. "I was in two minds about a norchid, sir," he said, with the air of a man who has painted an Academy picture; "but a rose is more Hinglish. We're just in time, sir. I can hear the carriage wheels."

Marcus, looking ten years younger, went down to the hall door to receive his guests. Miss Smythe's sarcasms always upset his liver, and, although he liked her, he was rather afraid of Lady Fitzgibbon. "I'm glad she's left that little beast, Pepworth, at home," he said to himself. "Wanted to instruct me what a lord of the manor ought to do, the last time I saw Horrible child! Ought to be pole-axed or asphyxiated or something unpleasant done to him. Talks about his political connections and his duty to the county, already. By the time he's fifteen, he'll find the county too small for him."

Lady Fitzgibbon looked very imposing. Miss Smythe seemed thinner than ever.

"I am disappointed," said Lady Fitzgibbon; "I thought you would come to the lodge gates to welcome us. It is the first time I have been here for years. Confess, now,"—"She'll spoil it all if she tries to be arch," thought Miss Smythe—"confess, now, you had forgotten us."

Miss Smythe saved the truthful Marcus. "Forgotten us!" she said; "he has not the appearance of a man who has forgotten us. There is quite a juvenile look about Mr. Pendragon. Of course, he is glad to see us."

Marcus felt that he was, and said so. The old hall seemed the brighter for Lady Fitzgibbon's somewhat opulent presence; she diffused a sense of color. Miss Smythe, chastely clad in black, looked bright and happy. He felt that he could really like Miss Smythe if there were a little more of her. She was too thin to be an entity.

"Hadn't we better lunch first?" he suggested; "the orchids will keep. You must be hungry after your drive."

"I suppose I ought to say that

luncheon is immaterial; but I'm too material for such a subterfuge," declared Lady Fitzgibbon. "Besides,

I'm hungry."

She enjoyed her luncheon. Marcus, an unobservant man, as a rule, ceased to wonder at her matronly appearance. No one with an appetite like that could remain slim. She told him that it was immoral for a single man to have so good a cook. As long as a man dined well, he was never lonely.

Marcus was quite surprised at his own success as a host, for Miss Smythe always seemed to know the subjects in which he was interested, and to lead up to them. Lady Fitzgibbon, when she was not eating, also said pleasant things. With their coffee in the library, Marcus even suggested liqueurs, as the afternoon was treacherous, whereupon, with more conviction than tact, Lady Fitzgibbon declared that so thoughtful a man ought not to be wasted on chemical experiments.

Miss Smythe frowned. "I'll send for the head gardener," said Marcus, hastily turning the conversation. "I wish people wouldn't take so much interest in my experiments. They're

always clamoring for results."

"Oh, it's only a manifestation of their interest in you," declared Miss Smythe. "People don't want you to call on them in fragments; they wish to see the whole of you at once. You can't collect yourself if part of you is blown down to Miss Frere's and the other fragments are scattered over Templehurst."

"Do you know Miss Frere?" asked Marcus, eagerly. "She's a great friend

of the Hawtreys."

"No; I don't feel good enough," declared Miss Smythe. "I know, when I see her exquisite face, if I were a man, I should kneel down as she passed."

Marcus was surprised. So was Lady Fitzgibbon—unpleasantly. She stared at Miss Smythe. "I beg your pardon," said the latter. "The thought of Miss Frere made me sentimental. Beauty and goodness don't often go together."

"It is time we looked at the orchids,"

said Lady Fitzgibbon, pettishly. "Are you coming, Enid?"

Her tone implied that Miss Smythe had been excessively foolish to awaken Marcus's interest in another woman. and that she would rather Miss Smythe should remain where she was.

Miss Smythe was annoyed with herself for momentarily forgetting the object of Lady Fitzgibbon's presence at "Oh, no," she said; "if Mr. Pendragon will excuse me, I'm not coming to look at the orchids; they wouldn't like it.''

"I assure you!" said the petrified

"No, we have nothing in common," declared Miss Smythe. "They'd make

me look like a poor relation.'

"I shall feel hurt if you don't come," pleaded Marcus. Did Miss Smythe intend to leave him alone with Lady Fitzgibbon? All his shyness instantly returned.

"Hobble away and get it over," said $_{
m Miss}$ Smythe, peremptorily. "You've discussed luncheon, now discuss orchids. We want to reach Templehurst before dark."

"But what will you do?" asked the

perplexed Marcus.

'Oh, read.'' She settled herself comfortably in a chair, and became immersed in "The Soul Hunters."

"Now, take my arm," commanded Lady Fitzgibbon. "You're as lame as—as Enid's jokes. Lean on me, Mr. Pendragon."

His leg being very painful, Marcus, in spite of a stick, was glad of Lady Fitzgibbon's arm, although he wished that she had not been so snappy to Miss Smythe. Lady Fitzgibbon divined his thoughts as they entered the orchid houses. "You mustn't mind my being snappy," she said, softly. "When a woman hasn't a man to guide her, she loses her sense of proportion."

They wandered through the cloying, damp heat of the orchid houses, admiring beautiful blossoms. Marcus had arranged the plants himself, and the result suggested butterflies hovering amid delicate flowers. The head gardener, following dutifully behind them, estimated each orchid at its market value until Marcus stopped Lady Fitzgibbon, although she was not arithmetical, was impressed by the amounts.

"And how often do you come here?" she asked, filled with admiration. "Why do you keep all this luxury to

yourself?"

"Oh, every week or so," Marcus declared. "You see, I'm so busy—

"You ought to share all this beauty." Lady Fitzgibbon toyed with the long sprays which Marcus, disregarding the gardener's audible groans, had cut for her.

"Share? Certainly. With whom?" asked the unsuspecting Marcus. often send some down to the Cottage

Hospital."

Lady Fitzgibbon's fine eyes gazed dreamily into the air. "Cottage Hospital! A wife would appreciate them more," she said, softly; and began to

talk to the gardener.

Marcus wondered why her eyes were so pensive. There seemed a conspiracy to force him to marry somebody. Perhaps, Lady Fitzgibbon would explain to him what he was expected to

"Hawtrey was telling me last night I ought to marry," he bungled. "Why

ought I to marry?"

Such frankness overwhelmed Lady Fitzgibbon. "Your position as lord of the manor," she murmured, faintly. "It is surely an inadequate return to Providence for its many mercies that you should remain single."

"It hadn't occurred to me in that light," said the unsophisticated Marcus. I—I'm so used to these things."

They left the orchid houses, and walked up the path in the waning afternoon. "Lean on me," said Lady Fitzgibbon, almost tenderly. "I, too, am very lonely. Sometimes, I feel that Pepworth is too heavy a responsibility; he almost requires a syndicate to manage him; a mother isn't adequate." A man who could value orchids so lightly might be taught to appreciate her at her proper worth. 'Lean on me.''

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"Pep-!" Marcus was fond of children, but he feared Pepworth. The thought that, if he were to marry, he might one day become the parent of a Pepworth, chilled him to the bone. "No," he said, decisively, "marriage is not for all. Nature meant some men to devote themselves to the good of mankind in general, instead of—

"-Making the happiness of one woman in particular," archly remarked Lady Fitzgibbon. "Ah, Mr. Pendragon, I feel sure you are not one of those men who would consciously play with a woman's heart. Dine with us next week, and we will resume the discussion." She felt that she had made rapid progress.

Miss Smythe still sat in the library.

She, too, looked lonely.

"Why, your book's upside down!" declared Lady Fitzgibbon. "I believe you have been asleep."

"Oh, no, I haven't been asleep. only reading the book upside down in order to get the epigrams right."

Whipple's manner in bringing Lady Fitzgibbon her tea was positively ducal. He felt she would go so well with the family plate.

"Don't make any more experiments," said Lady Fitzgibbon, archly, as Marcus put her into the carriage.

Miss Smythe leaned swiftly forward. "On the contrary, make as many as you like, except one;" and the carriage rolled away.

"What did you mean by that?"

gasped Lady Fitzgibbon.

"I don't know," said Miss Smythe.
"I had a kind of feeling, all the time, that we were eating his bread and salt, and were going to scalp him afterward. So, I had to—to warn him. It seemed only fair."

"The Lady Fitzgibbon laughed. hunt begins. Besides, it is all for his good. He ought to be intensely flattered that we take so much interest in

him. He wants protecting."

"From us?"

"Ah, now, you're touchy again. It is my scalp, remember. You forgot that, once or twice."

She did not see the burning flush

which suffused her companion's thin cheeks

"I ought to have remembered that his scalp belongs to you," said Miss Smythe, in rather muffled tones; "he hasn't enough hair for both of us."

"Well, only be loyal to me. I'm really very fond of him. He'll be much happier with me than alone."

"I am loyal. If he must marry, I'd rather he married you than any one else. After all, if he does propose to you, he'll have to propitiate Pepworth. Do you think that any one could be really happy with Pepworth? He—he knows so much for one so young."

"He does. I have been a model parent for twelve years," said Lady Fitzgibbon, with emphasis; "a model parent. If I were not, I sometimes think that the community would like me to drown Pepworth."

"He ought to have been drowned long ago," said Miss Smythe; "it's too late now. No one would dare to take so great a liberty with him. You might as well try to drown an iceberg."

V

MARCUS AWAKES

On Friday evening, as Marion Frere stood by the fireplace awaiting the arrival of the doctor's guest, the pearly shimmer of her dress irradiated a beautiful personality, and accentuated its dreamy sweetness. It was impossible to imagine those half-revealing, half-clinging folds draping any one else; they conveyed an impression of slumbering opals. Her quaint necklace of silver-set stones suggested wandering moonbeams which, settling on her sweet throat, had become transmuted into a faint, ethereal radiance. A string of pearls wreathed itself into the thick coils of nut-brown hair upturned from the white brow. Eyes of violet, even as the flower itself is leafsheltered, looked forth between long lashes, their limpid regard filling the gazer's soul. Her soft, low voice trilled with the music of wandering waters; her teeth were pearls; her upper lip was a rose-leaf tinged with red; the lower lip sweet, a little irresolute at the corners as if tiredly drooping toward the dimpled chin. There was a suggestion of sadness in the beautiful eyes—eyes which had dreamily gazed forth from her lattice for thirty years, without seeing a Lancelot riding by. To look at her was to understand why Lancelot would dismount as if he had seen the Holy Grail.

serene. sweetly majestic, dreamily sad woman had never loved. although obsessed by the knowledge that Love would come to her in his own good time—how, or when, she knew not. Some starved heart, world-strangled and stifled, strove from the darkness toward the white sunlight of her soul. There was a look of waiting in her eyes, the dove-like softness of which had never stirred or trembled beneath unhallowed gaze. To be loved by her meant re-baptism to a man, a consecration to high ideals, the touch of her hand an uplifting from the muddy world, her smile the coming again of the leper's flesh even as the flesh of a little child. And yet, this pearl among women, this paragon of souls, knew not the world, and dwelt alone in the village of Alton, gliding forth from her dainty home at irregular intervals, when the mood seized her, to teach the hope of the Hawtreys French verbs and With her, the medieval manners. child was a demure little maid, so sweet and fragrant that the gods would surely snatch her from the lap of earth, ere men had learned to sigh for her; apart from Miss Frere, she dropped her demureness, and played cricket with a

Miss Frere stood alone by the blazing fire, fan in hand. Lost in a dreamy reverie, she forgot her surroundings until Mrs. Hawtrey's voice, giving final directions to the cook, recalled her to earth again. She had often met Marcus before, and smiled as she thought of this quaint human beetle's pursuit of explosive shadows—shadows which, loath to part with him, carried choice fragments away into the unknown.

Frankly, he was afraid of her, and tried to hide it with a timid courtesy infinitely touching. At times, he proffered uncouth little kindnesses. Once, he had even ventured to confide to her an expression of his doubt as to Dodds's veracity. Then, something frightened him away, and he fled with the awk-

ward gait of a startled cow.

Mrs. Hawtrey sailed into the room, fair, floridly wholesome, cumbered, like Martha, with many culinary cares. "You can't tell what Mr. Pendragon really likes," she said, somewhat "It is useless to get anytestily. thing especially nice, for he never knows the difference. I often think that the word 'entrées' ought to be substituted in the revised version for casting 'pearls.' Mr. Pendragon eats everything put before him, without giving it a second thought. Once, he did have pudding twice; but it was only because he wanted to take the second helping up to Sophie when he thought I wasn't looking.'

"What will the doctor do, if he leaves Mr. Pendragon behind?" asked Miss Frere. "I am afraid they will

both be very lonely."

"Oh, yes, my dear; I let William talk about it, though I don't for a moment believe he will ever leave here. He thinks it a duty he owes the children. It always takes a man a long time to decide a thing he ought either to do at once, or never think about at all. Ah, there's Sophie, crying for you now. Little wretch! Don't marry, my dear. Commit any sin mentioned in the decalogue, but not that one. It's an awful thing when your husband can give you only one silk dress, and it's all over sticky finger marks which, like the poor, are always with you. Benzine, too, resembles the name of a big subscriber to a public charity; it always leaks out."

Miss Frere smiled, and slowly adjusted Mrs. Hawtrey's erratically voluminous neck-gear. Under the skilful manipulation of her long, slim fingers, the doctor's wife ceased to resemble a human peony, and became more like a cabbage-rose. "I think you will do

now," said Miss Frere, breathing the sweetness of her own soul into this fretful woman, filled with the little burdens and worries of life. "If you don't mind, I'll go up to Sophie."

"Oh, she's said her prayers; I made sure of that. If I were to die suddenly, I should do it with the knowledge that I have always made the children say their prayers. I am afraid that it is rather the Mohammedan idea that repetition entitles you to a certain amount of consideration in the next world. It is like leaving cards on people in this, except that you don't expect them to be returned. No one can reproach me for neglecting my children's prospects for the—the future."

"Poor little tired soul!"

"That's what you always say, my dear. But, as we're going to rest perpetually in the next world, we shall enjoy it all the more if we are thoroughly tired out in this. I know Sophie likes to look on while you say her prayers for her; but I will never believe that you can get to heaven by deputy, although, nowadays, influence is everything. Dolly is to dine with us to-night. Sophie is in the small nursery all by herself, as a punishment. She wouldn't go to bed."

"Why not?"

"Oh, some nonsense about Mr. Pendragon promising to bring her a doll. I told her that she must wait until tomorrow, and that she must not let dolls come between her and her Maker. What do you think she said?"

"I cannot imagine."

"No, of course, you can't. She said she had never seen her Maker, but she did know a dolly when she saw it; and she wanted to see one, badly. There's Mr. Pendragon's carriage, now."

"I don't think I ought to have any dinner if I'm not allowed to see Sophie." Miss Frere became gently insistent. "I should have felt just

the same at her age."

"Oh, very well, then. You seem to look upon children as human flowers and angel smiles—angel spasms, I call them. When you have as many children of your own as I have, my dear, you'll find a weed or two among them, I'll be bound. But I must go into the dining-room, and see that everything is right. If good works amount to anything, that entrée à la Rochambault ought to count, some day; but I'm quite sure that Mr. Pendragon won't even notice it. I believe, if one were to put picric acid into his soup, he would swallow it without a murmur."

"Would he have time?" asked Miss Frere, knowing that it was idle to stem the torrent of Mrs. Hawtrey's eloquence. "Wouldn't his teeth pre-

cipitate the catastrophe?"

"I dare say, my dear, but the principle's the same. Early and late, we lay waste our powers preparing offerings for the stomachs of mankind; and some men eat too much, and some men eat too little; but, whatever their appetites may be like, we never get any credit for ministering to them. A man may fancy he wants to go to heaven, but I never believe it; he couldn't be permanently happy in a place where there are no restaurants."

She bustled away, as Miss Frere walked slowly up the stairs. Ere she had reached the top, a little, whiterobed figure bounded breathlessly out of the nursery, and ran toward her

with a sob of delight.

Miss Frere carried the child back into the room, and sat down in a low rocker by the fire, Sophie clinging to her with the tenderness of loving childhood. "I knew you'd come," the child said, trying to dry her eyes and smile, "and I was crying 'cause I couldn't keep both eyes open."

"Yes, darling, of course, I was coming. Now, I'll hold you ever so tightly, and you'll go to sleep, and

forget all your troubles."

Sophie's sobbing ceased, her curly head dropped on Miss Frere's shoulder; the warmth of the fire made her sleepy. "Sing me to sleep," she insisted, with half-closed eyes; "sing me to sleep." And Miss Frere began to

rock her softly, crooning with infinite tenderness:

"Sleep, baby, sleep, as sleeps the royal rose Whose perfumed petals in the twilight close. Sleep, baby, sleep, your head upon my breast.

For all the tired birds have gone to rest. Sleep, baby, sleep.

"Sleep, baby, sleep, while wander on white wings
Around you dreams of wondrous happenings.
To-morrow, waken in your tiny bed,
And whisper all the wee, wee fairies said.
Sleep, baby, sleep.

"Sleep, baby, sleep, sleep on un-"

Miss Frere broke off, aware of a grotesque shadow on the wall. The shadow suddenly disappeared; she was conscious of a thin hand extending a huge doll. The hand wavered nervously up and down.

Miss Frere looked at the hand with an amused smile, and whispered to Sophie, "Wake up a moment, dearest. See, the fairies are bringing your doll."

Sophie struggled up, her wondering, wide-opened eyes staring, half-fearful but wholly delighted, at the shadow on the white wall. "Is it—is it real

fairies?" she gasped.

"Shut your eyes again, and perhaps it will come back. Don't open them till I count ten," said Miss Frere, and, as Sophie rammed her dimpled knuckles into her eyes, beckoned to the person outside to bring in the doll, and place it on the child's lap.

Marcus's apologetic features, lighted up by timid blue eyes, appeared at the door. He crept softly toward Sophie, put the doll on her lap, and, as noiselessly, retreated. For the moment, he

had forgotten his shyness.

He stayed outside in the passage while the child sleepily counted, "Seven, eight—si-ix, fi-ive, ni-ine—ten." At the moment of fruition, the doll slipped from Sophie's lap to the ground. She wandered into the land of dreams, clinging to Marion Frere as if she would fain take her also.

Miss Frere, thinking that Marcus had gone, drew the little white figure to her heart, and pressed her cheek against it as she gazed down at the tired child, with that instinct for maternal joy which slumbers in the breast of every good woman. The love of woman for man seldom endures to the end. Sometimes, the tragedy of a man's life begins when the child of his love steals her mother's heart away, and leaves him bankrupt indeed. In the unending circle of things, the wrong rights itself after the child grows up and goes to the man she has chosen, relentlessly abandoning the mother who has forsaken her husband. to the woman who has neither husband nor child, and clasps the child of another woman to her heart in passionate despair, life is filled with pain, the desolation of loneliness, isolation, the sense of sweetness leaving her as she fades into the barren desert of spinsterhood, and no man comes to lead her from its sandy wastes through Love's garden.

All the dreamy gentleness of Miss Frere's nature rose in sudden revolt against the soul-solitude which surrounded her. Would no one come to clasp her hand and show the primrose way, no gentle knight, in love with loving, ride o'er the plain and make her his? Her violet eyes filled with tears; she put the child softly in its little bed, and stretched white hands to heaven: "Oh, God, remove this reproach from me! Give me some one to care for, to love and cherish, to guard from harm, to make worthy of Thee. Thou knowest I have not repined, that I have done the little Thou hast given me to do. Grant me this great gift of Love to take away my pain, to make the sweeter Thy sweet world. Every morning, I look out upon Thy world for a message—Thy message—to come to me. Every night, I look up to Thy stars—they make no sign. Is there no human soul in the world that needs me, no one that I need? Wouldst Thou indeed have me worship Thee from cloistral walls where never sunlight shines nor little children smile? Remove, oh, God, this shadow from my heart, this desolate sorrow, this painful peace of uneventful days. The silence of the night affrights me, the sunshine warms me not, for I am as one groping in the Room of Life. Other women have husbands, children, friends; I have only the pain, the emptiness, the creeping shadows of the lonely years."

Her hands dropped suddenly; she had exhausted her vitality in this passionate plea, this appeal to God's justice, God's pity, God's compassion. Abashed, perplexed, faltering, she stood there, the firelight shining softly on the flowing folds of her dress, her Madonna-like eyes, her sweet lips.

Marcus, fascinated, chained, leaned against the wall in an agony of selfreproach, scarce breathing lest she should hear. He recalled his own words to Hawtrey about the "Christian Superstition." What was this world of women into which he had never entered? Hitherto, women had been nothing to him save the unnecessary burdens which hampered men in the prosecution of scientific research. He had never for an instant troubled himself about trying to understand them. It had seemed to him that all women were anthropological mistakes, founded on an unscientific misconception of masculine requirements. His acquaintance with Sophie had begun by finding her asleep in a field when she had strayed away from her nurse. Somehow, they had taken to each other, and it had never occurred to Marcus that she would grow up and become a woman. By degrees, he had acquired the habit of teaching her natural history. From natural history to dolls was a rapid transition, which came about so simply that neither of them troubled to ask the why or the wherefore of it. He now realized that his friendship for Sophie was but the beginning of a wider knowledge of her sex. That the knowledge should be so overwhelming, soul-gripping, of such compulsive intensity; that it should flash upon his mental consciousness, illuminating it with vivid light, made him lean against the wall with tottering knees, trembling hands, tongue-tied lips.

He had seen into the white soul of a

woman, had heard this passionate appeal to heaven to save her from the curse of lonely days. It would kill her to know that he had overheard it. She would leave Alton, seek the dreaded shelter of the cloister, waste her loveliness in a convent cell while her heart cried out for love, sympathy, the affection of one worthy of her. Her fantastic dreaminess of temperament, in conflict with her womanhood, appealed to him; her loveliness filled his eyes with delighted awe. She was the voice of the God he had denied, calling him, thrilling him, to her, a living, irrefragable proof of Ordered Intelligence. And Chance had possessed him of her secret. Chance! Was not Chance a misnomer for the "Christian Superstition"?

Miss Frere's voice, sweet as it was, thundered in his ears, dragged the heart out of him, left him the mere husk of a man. He must do something, get away before she discovered him. What could he do? Better kill himself than put her to the shame of knowing that he had overheard her prayer. In the strenuous stress and strain of this sudden revelation—this new gospel of a moment—he remembered: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

He drew up one foot noiselessly, removed his shoe, then the other, and crept away silently, with averted glance—the glance of a man who has been initiated into a stupendous mystery, who has rent the Veil of the Temple and seen the Holy of Holies, who has become transfigured, transformed, filled with a new life, the paths of which he fears to tread. He stumbled when he reached the head of the stair. Emerging from darkness into light, he was as one coming from light into darkness.

"Leg still bothering you?" asked Hawtrey, as he entered the drawingroom.

Marcus looked at him uncomprehendingly. "N-no," he said, dreamily; "n-no."

"Not had another shock to-day,

surely? I took away anything that might prevent your coming. What's the matter?"

"Oh, n-nothing; I—I don't know." "You're hungry, and want your dinner; that's what's the matter with you. Where's Miss Frere?" asked the doctor, turning to his wife. "I'm hungry."

"Ah-h! So am I," said Marcus; but

the hunger was spiritual.

VI

THE CUP AND THE LIP

Marcus accepted Lady Fitzgibbon's invitation to dine at Templehurst, in spite of his increasing reluctance to meet that youthful yet hoary cynic, Pepworth, who, at the ripe age of twelve, was allowed to sit up to dinner, and generally took the head of the table. The thought of the customary "cross-examination" by that juvenile Old Man of the Sea always spoiled his appetite, for he knew, instinctively, that Pepworth did not believe in him; that he felt Providence had been guilty of gross carelessness in making so inefficient a man lord of the manor. Filled with perturbation, Marcus even went so far as to ask Miss Smythe how she accounted for Pepworth's pronounced views on subjects which occasioned great men-men of mature yearsthe most anxious thought. Miss Smythe, after a somewhat shadowy consideration of the subject, could account for Pepworth's views only on the supposition that he must have evolved them from his inner consciousness in an older world—some world which he had honored with his presence before condescending to be born into this.

"But, surely, there isn't an Education Bill in the next world?" queried the perplexed Marcus. "I met him riding the other day. He has very strong theories about Dissenters."

"Yes, I know. He thinks that they ought not to be allowed; that there is not adequate room for them in a

well-ordered world."

"I wonder if they think the same about him."

"Probably. He has already told the Dissenting minister in Alton that he has no moral justification for living."

"He won't want my views, surely? Shall I be left alone with him after

dinner?"

"Oh, no. To-day, he is almost human, and has taken his tutor to the British Museum to set him right about mummies. The tutor has a theory concerning mummies which Pepworth could not conscientiously permit. He said that it 'lacked verisimilitude.'"

Marcus felt greatly relieved. If Pepworth's attention were thus engrossed, that terrible infant could not, after his wonted manner, propound posers about local taxation. He possessed in perfection the art of making others look foolish when apparently in quest of information.

Marcus took Lady Fitzgibbon in to dinner, the curate, in an apologetic manner, preceding them with Miss Smythe, as if he were conscious of taking a liberty; the rigid rules of etiquette, however, seemed to leave him no alternative. Marcus rather envied the curate, for, in a vague, shadowy way, Miss Smythe was comforting, and liked to talk about Miss Now, her keen wits seized on every point of the curate's conversation as swiftly as a chameleon darts its tongue out after a fly. In a short time, the curate, whose mentality was not overwhelming, felt as if he were the fly, and wriggled uneasily in his seat, as if Miss Smythe had already begun to swallow him.

From time to time, Miss Smythe looked at Marcus with pitying eyes—eyes which wondered how he, regardless of his coming doom, could dare to eat. Marcus, however, not knowing anything about the future, sought consolation in food, and ate heartily. He had so greatly enjoyed his dinner at the Hawtreys' that he began to repent of his sedentary habits. But, as the evening wore on,

there was a solemnity about the Fitzgibbon banquet which depressed him, a feeling as if some one were to be offered up as an atonement. In spite of his absence, the spirit of Pepworth pervaded the room, and deprecated all attempts at cheerfulness. Even Miss Smythe, greatly to the curate's relief, gradually relapsed into silence, and refrained from swallowing him.

When the curate had been fortuitously summoned to administer spiritual consolation to a moribund ratcatcher, Marcus was left in the vast, oak-paneled dining-room at the top of the long table, with two solemn servitors to minister to his wants. The mere fact of these unfamiliar faces, reflected in the mirrors around him, made Marcus nervous. missed Whipple's deprecatory cough, his readiness to enlarge on local topics. To sit there and drink port, which, his palate instinctively told him, was much less mature than Pepworth, became depressing. wished that he had ordered his carriage at ten instead of half-past. If he raised his glass to his lips, it was refilled directly it touched the A servitor brought him cigars table. —eigars which, instinct told him, were not really as ripe as the alldominant Pepworth. Over the mantelpiece was an arrogant portrait of Pepworth, in which the artist had delineated his long nose, his solemn eyes, with artistic fidelity. The portrait suggested that Elgin marbles, and not the youthful variety, were the only ones in which Pepworth ever took any interest.

When Marcus entered the drawing-room, Miss Smythe was nowhere to be seen. Lady Fitzgibbon sat alone by the fire, looking ten years younger than in the daytime. As Marcus approached, he became conscious of bewildering rose-misted shoulders, massive but comely. In the soft light, the yellowness of her complexion disappeared. Her beautifully molded arms were bare. The light played upon the shimmer-

ing sequins of her dress, breaking and reflecting in a thousand points. Lady Fitzgibbon felt sure that Marcus admired her; failing this admiration on his part, she was prepared to supply it herself.

"I know what it is," she said, suddenly, as he made his way toward her. "You would rather experiment at home than on me. Sit down, and tell me all about it."

Marcus sat down, at some distance from Lady Fitzgibbon. "Ah," she said, looking him full in the face, "this is the first opportunity for a chat in nearly a fortnight. Life is so

strange!"

Marcus felt that she was doing her best to make it so. "Well, you see, my dear Lady Fitzgibbon, the fact is, life's so—so absorbing! I—I haven't time to think about life. I've just been reading Dalby's 'Balancing of Engines,' and had to work out the diagrams. Nearly lost my own balance at times; it was so engrossing!'

"No, of course, you haven't much time to think. Besides, it is so diffi-

cult to make things balance."

"Quite so; quite so!" Marcus felt that he was getting on better. "Now, you see, in scientific research, every day is more—more absorbing than the last. In fact, you—you never know where you are; never know where you are, my dear Lady Fitzgibbon."

"That's extremely probable," she said, with a touch of acerbity. "But you must remember, in your own individual case, that you have no right to wed yourself wholly to science."

"Ah, pardon me; but that's the mistake you ladies make. To do a thing thoroughly, you have to give your whole time to it. Now, there's a man I know who is so busy with 'Approach Curves,' that he even forgot to go to the christening of his own baby. Fact, I assure you. Didn't even know the baby until it was pointed out to him."

In his eagerness to demonstrate this profound fact, Marcus hitched his chair nearer to Lady Fitzgibbon's.

"You seem to have studied to some

advantage," said she; and felt that even "Approach Curves" might sometimes be utilized for other than scientific purposes.

Marcus did not take tea or coffee. The silver-tray-laden servitor withdrew backward, with inexpressible grace, and Lady Fitzgibbon settled her-

self on the sofa.

"You may have noticed," she continued, "how, in the midst of wealth and social distractions, one is sometimes utterly bored?"

"Ah, but, surely, you wouldn't allow yourself to be bored? Your mind's

too active."

"I know it is active; but, then, you see me only at my best. With any one so interesting as yourself, I am never bored. It is only"—she languidly toyed with her fan—"when the—when the stimulus of your presence is removed that I feel bored."

"Very kind of you to think so. Now, Hawtrey doesn't think I'm at all stimulating; says I'm a dull, depressing dog, and that I ought to—" Marcus stopped hastily, on the brink of a

precipice.

"Yes? Dr. Hawtrey does not often

say things which bear repeating."

"Oh, well, you should hear his—his anecdotes. He says I ought to rouse myself," lamely declared Marcus, who had not meant to say anything of the sort. Lady Fitzgibbon was so friendly and encouraging that he almost brought himself to speak to her of Miss Frere.

"Can I help you?" gently inquired Lady Fitzgibbon. "I should very much like to rouse you, Mr. Pendragon. Forgive me for saying that some one ought to have done it long ago."

Marcus felt pleased and flattered. "Now, that's kind of you—uncommonly kind of you. When will you

come to Alton, and---"

"And—?" She put a beautifully shaped hand on his arm. "You flatter

me by your eagerness."

"—and see the orchids?" queried the innocent Marcus. "I assure you, they looked quite different the other day when you were pointing them out to me. They were a whim of my dear mother's. For her sake, I keep them going; but, do you know, I'm a bit color-blind, and to me one orchid is

very like another orchid."

Lady Fitzgibbon's mental reflections about orchids were unmentionable; at that moment, all orchids were eminently distasteful to her. "Ah, your dear mother! Aren't you afraid to live in that great house alone—a house which must be haunted by a thousand memories?"

Marcus gazed thoughtfully into the "No, I'm not afraid," he said, whimsically; "no, I'm not afraid. Sometimes, I like to sit by the fire, and talk to her just as I am talking to you."

"Really, Mr. Pendragon, do you mean to imply that I am old enough to

be your mother?"

"Not at all, not at all! You have quite misunderstood me. What I meant was that I like to fancy she is there, as I look at her empty seat."

"Ah, but, Mr. Pendragon"—Lady Fitzgibbon gazed tenderly into his honest eyes—"that seat need not be empty. A man like you ought not to allow it to remain empty."

"You think so? Well, now, the

same thing occurred to me."

"Think so! I am sure of it; perfectly positive. There comes a time in a man's life when he ought not to be alone——'

"There does."

"—when it is a crime for him to give himself up to dreaming of the past, instead of—" Her beautiful head drooped a little nearer to Marcus. She faltered toward him.

"Instead of?"

"-dreaming of the future."

"You are quite right; quite right. You see, I—I didn't know I had got into the habit of it."

"Ah, but you have. You do yourself an injustice. Your imaginative nature should be shielded from contact with the world. You want some one to do this for you-some dear, feminine friend who—who believes in you. Now, I have seen a great deal of the world; I could be of great help to you, if we were really friends."

"You are too kind, you really are." It is delightful to think that you honor me with your friendship. I—I don't know how to thank you. The fact is, I—I am rather worried just now. should like to tell you something."

Lady Fitzgibbon's fine eyes lighted up with triumph. The man was going to propose to her. There was a little thrill at her heart, for she really liked Marcus very much. In spite of his foibles, he would be such a refuge from the perpetual Pepworth, who seemed to consider that she could never be sufficiently thankful to him for having allowed her the honor of becoming his mother. She forgot about Marcus's money, his position. Life suddenly became interesting. "After all," she laughed to herself, "it is love which keeps the world sweet. If this good, honest gentleman really loves me, I will never make him regret it. Providence owes me some amends for Fitzgibbon."

"Don't speak yet," she smiled. "Let me realize for a moment what you are going to say to me. We-we mustn't be foolish."

"Oh, I didn't mean to say anything really foolish," said Marcus. "I was just going to—

Miss Smythe stood in the doorway. She held a telegram in her hand. "Pepworth has changed his mind about staying in town to-night. He wants a carriage sent down to meet him."

Lady Fitzgibbon vainly longed that Herod could revisit the earth, and meet

Pepworth.

There came a sudden trampling of horses' hoofs on the gravel outside. Pendragon's carriage," nounced one of the twin servitors.

"Oh, it was nothing important," hastily declared Marcus. "It will keep until some other time. I had no idea that it was half-past ten."

"It is barely ten," icily declared Lady Fitzgibbon. "But I know you don't like keeping your horses in the night air, Mr. Pendragon." She was angry with herself, hurt, humiliated.

She had been unwomanly, a husbandhunter, had forgotten her part for the moment, had allowed herself to become in earnest. Then she pulled herself together. "Pepworth is so faddy! I must see that his room is exactly as he likes it. You'll forgive my hurry-

ing away?"

She pressed his hand with warm, white fingers, and looked him fearlessly in the face. Marcus, vaguely conscious of something wrong, gazed after her in amazement. He thought that she was afraid of Pepworth, whereas she was afraid only of herself. There was something wrong, too, with Miss Smythe. Her cheeks burned a dull red, the hand which held the telegram trembled. "You—you're not afraid of that cub?" he said, energetically.

"Afraid!" She towered above him. "I am afraid of no one. I am only afraid when I have done something

shameful."

"Have you done something shameful?" faltered Marcus.

"Yes; without letting you know, I ordered your horses at ten."

" Why?"

"I thought if you remained later,

you might go the wrong road."

"But, my dear Miss Smythe, there was no shame in that. It was kindness itself. And I know the road by heart."

"You think you do, but you don't. There is only one person who can show

it you."

"One person?"
"Yes—only one."

"W-who?" queried Marcus.

"Miss Frere. Go and ask her to show it you. I—beg your pardon, Mr. Pendragon."

"I don't know what has come over everybody. It must be Pepworth

again."

'Yes, it is Pepworth again. Pepworth pervades the place; he is a night-

mare. Good night."

Marcus clasped her thin hand in his. "Thank you," he said, earnestly; "thank you."

"What for?"

"For showing me the road. I'll never forget it;" and he was gone.

Miss Smythe looked after him with shining eyes. "I am the meanest woman on earth; but he doesn't dream that, in another minute, he would have committed himself." She went up to Lady Fitzgibbon's room. "Nora, I've come to say good-bye."

"I thought you looked guilty. You purposely interrupted us just when he——"

"Yes. I—I couldn't bear to let you have him. I thought neither of you would be happy."

"Thank you. Your consideration for my happiness is too overwhelming. Does he—does he—?"

ing. Does he—does he—?"
"No, he doesn't; of course not.

Good-bye."

"Good-bye," said Lady Fitzgibbon, dully. She came after the retreating Miss Smythe. "No; don't go; we've been friends for years. I want you, even though you may sting me again."

"What for?"

Lady Fitzgibbon smiled, bitterly. "To help me bring up Pepworth."

"He's bringing us up, isn't he?" said Miss Smythe. "We'd better travel for a few weeks."

"Yes," said Lady Fitzgibbon, collapsing on a sofa; "it is the only thing

to do.'

VII

ON THE BRINK

Marcus was very much annoyed with himself. Hitherto, chemical research had constituted his most important occupation; now, however, chemical research was flavorless. Instead of beginning work with suicidal preparations, which should, later in the day, imperil his existence, he sat aimlessly at a table covered with retorts and bottles. All his interest in them had died away. These squatbellied, wry-necked holders of perverse genii summoned at his will were huddled into one comprehensive, neglected, dusty heap:

"Long cobwebs waved from door to door, And dust was thick upon the floor, The blowpipes all unheeded lay; A robin on the window sill, No longer wild, nor dreading ill, Grew tame with every passing day."

Even the fat female spiders spun their webs around the bottles, and used them as aids in fly-catching. Marcus hated female spiders because they always made a meal of their husbands—the proceeding seemed so harsh—and he generally drove them away from the laboratory. Now, however, he did not notice their presence, and, consequently, they made the most of their opportunities and their unsuspecting spouses.

It was not Marcus's leg which troubled him—the wound had healed long since; it was not his general health, for he felt conscious of a new joy in life; but there was something drawing him away from all these things which had hitherto constituted his chief aim. And he, amid the ruins of his own soul, sat wondering what was to become of himself when everything finally faded into nothingness, and no fresh interests arose to fill his quiet days.

No fresh interests! Had he not come to the end of the universe, only to look forth and discover the beginning of another world in which his feet had never strayed—a world of flower and song, of sunshine and silver streams, of quaint fancies and unimaginable conceits—a world which belonged to youth, with its rippling laughter and joyous ideals, its sweetness and light? What right had he to peer into this enchanted garden with purblind eyes, back draw affrighted? then Clearly, it was no concern of his. Once, in the days beyond recall, he had come to the edge of this unknown world, and had retraced his steps without entering. Then, the flowers lacked perfume, the song of the birds fell idly on his ears. Now, every note trilled with an ecstasy of pain. He called himself a fool, and began to grow thinner than ever. The doctor, imagining that this was grief caused by his own emigration project, plied Marcus with tonics until he vainly longed for death; for there is nothing so annoying to a man as to find his stomach clamoring for food when eating has ceased to be its customary joy.

"What is really the matter with you, Marcus?" the doctor critically asked one afternoon, as he came into the library, clad in cords and top boots, the picture of a healthy, breezy medico. "What is really the matter with you? Hanged if I know. If you're not careful, you'll have to be reported to *The Lancet* as an interesting case of sudden atrophy. Whipple tells me you didn't eat any luncheon to-day, in spite of the instructions I gave him."

"Didn't eat any luncheon! Of course, I didn't eat any luncheon," said Marcus, with concentrated bitterness. "You order a man to breakfast at nine, take a tonic at ten, have a snack of meat lozenges and bread and butter at eleven, beef-tea at twelve, more tonic at one, and then wonder that his burdened digestion cries out for rest. Whipple's overdoing it, and I've told him so; but he keeps on with a pig-headed pertinacity which is infinitely exasperating."

"Why?" The doctor laughed, jollily. "He's usually sensible

enough."

"Oh, he says you told him to keep on, and he daren't stop. If Whipple isn't careful, I shall feel it my duty to sack him."

"What for? Obeying my orders?"
"Well, don't give him such silly orders. A man isn't a camel. He has only one stomach, and it does want an occasional rest. Whipple seems to think I'm a human camel, with a different stomach for every day in the week."

"I'll tell him to be more careful. Get out as much as you can. What you want is fresh air. Go down and play with the children this afternoon. They'd like to see you. But I must be off; there's a lot of illness about. Get out, man; get out. Don't continue brooding indoors. Go out and—get married. Then, you won't feel so lonely."

"If I can't stay in my own house

when I like," grumbled Marcus, following Hawtrey to the door, "I wish you'd let me alone about getting married. One might think you'd started business as a matrimonial agent."

"Oh, you're moped to death, man. Get your horse, and come with me." The doctor looked down from his saddle, whither he had climbed with the

aid of a horse-block.

"You know I hate horses; they're

more dangerous than chemicals."

"Well, it might be a change for you to come down instead of going up. But, if you won't, you won't, and there's an end of it. I'll be over to-morrow night to try that white port of yours;" and he cantered down the avenue on his powerful cob.

Marcus turned away.

"Your fur coat, sir," said Whipple, holding out that imposing garment as the faint, chill Autumn wind began to play hide and seek in Marcus's grayish locks.

Marçus glared at him, so fiercely that Whipple quailed. "Doctor's orders, sir," he said, hastily; "doctor's orders, sir. I—I ain't done nothing, sir."

"G-r-r-r-r!" growled Marcus. "I wonder you don't bring me a muff to keep my hands warm." But he allowed Whipple to help him into his coat. "When have I your permission to come in again?"

"Not for two hours, sir," said Whip-

ple, very respectfully.

"Two hours! What the——!"

"Doctor's orders, sir."

"Whipple, I discharge you. Make up your accounts, and go."

"Very sorry, sir; can't go, sir."

"Can't go! Why not?"

"Doctor's orders, sir, to look after you."

Marcus turned around on the drive.

"Is this my house, or yours?"

"Yours, sir, 'cept the pantry; I don't allow nobody to interfere with

my pantry.'

Marcus's wrath evaporated. Whipple loved him, therefore Whipple must be humored. "Very well," he said, hastily; "you needn't go this time,

Whipple, but don't let it happen

again.'

"Thank you, sir," said Whipple, in most unthankful tones. His eye was grim, his aspect that of the good Samaritan who, needing his charitable pence, wishes he had been born a Levite.

"You know I didn't mean it," pleaded Marcus. "You're so hasty,

Whipple!"

"Don't mind my feelings, sir. It 'urts, but don't mind me," said Whipple. "I'm only a pore servant, I am." When Whipple took refuge in his "feelings," there was nothing more to be done, except to raise his wages. Marcus fled down the drive.

Once, he halted and looked back. Whipple stood majestically at the

door, to cut off his retreat.

"No good," groaned Marcus. "I can't dodge him. If I go to the laboratory, he'll turn up with a cup of beastly chocolate; if I hide in the shrubbery, he'll rout me out with some of his infernal lozenges; if I get into the house, he'll follow after with cocoa. Seems to think it his mission to fatten me for the Agricultural Show at Christmas. I'd like to blow his stupid head off."

With this uncharitable wish, he plunged deeply into the underwood, scaring an indignant pheasant intent on acorns, and continued his walk.

There was a soft haze in the sky, a pleasant stillness all around. Dead beech leaves rustled softly down into the grass, and made a glowing carpet there, or floated irresolutely on the surface of the little stream which bounded Marcus's property. water looked sullen and cold; an abandoned punt, stranded on an island in midstream, with moss growing over its crumbling sides, gave a touch of forlornness to the scene, in keeping with Marcus's melancholy Everything seemed to be awaiting death and decay, from the damp, fungus-grown boles of the beeches, almost white in the waning light, to a bedraggled, dew-drenched "drumble" bee, driven far from home by adverse fate, faint with hunger, mud-besmirched, torpid and numb. disregard for heroic consequences, Marcus placed the goldbanded insect on the palm of his own warm, naked hand, until he found a hollow beneath a beech root, and the bee sluggishly crawled into the shelter of its new home. Suddenly, bethinking himself of some sweets he had in his pocket for the doctor's children, Marcus put one within the bee's reach. "That will give him a square meal for some time to come," he said, more "Poor old duffer! light - heartedly. Now that the heat from my hand has warmed him up a bit, he looks like Whipple in his best livery, but not so well fed. Pity he isn't bigger; I'd train him to eat some of that stuff Whipple keeps bringing me. me! it's growing colder. Good-bye, old chap; don't eat too much all at once. You want burnishing up a bit." He began to croak, in unmelodious tones:

"'As Julia once a-slumbering lay,
It chanced a bee did fly that way—did fly
that way—
After a dew, or dew-like shower—or dewlike shower—
To tipple freely in a flower—
To tipple freely in a flower—
As Julia once—as Julia once—
As Julia once a-slumb—ring lay!
A-slumb—ring lay!""

Seeing that the bee was already beginning to enjoy the sugar in the sweet, and that its troubles were temporarily over, Marcus strolled aimlessly along until he came to a bridge, which crossed the river opposite Miss Frere's pretty little house.

Miss Frere, who had finished her somewhat perfunctory labors for the day, was regaling Dolly Hawtrey with tea and muffins, especially muffins. From the shelter of the bridge, Marcus could see through the low French windows into the drawing-room, with its pleasantly feminine atmosphere of home, its cozy chairs, crackling wood fire and dainty tea equipage. Dolly, evidently relieved from the burdensome acquirement of miscellaneous information, sat on a low stool, and

munched muffins with a recklessness that would inevitably ruin her digestive organs in the future, but afforded them, and her, immense enjoyment in the present. A silver urn hissed away on a little table. As he stood there, like the peri at heaven's gate, Marcus could almost hear Dolly petitioning for another cup of tea in order to wash down the excess of muffin.

Miss Frere's face was animated. She smiled and poured out more tea for the eager child. Marcus noticed the poise of her beautiful head, the loose sleeve of her tea-gown falling back from the exquisitely shaped arm, with no encumbering bracelet to mar its perfect whiteness. Had he been nearer, he would have seen, also.

"The blue of the inside arm,"

the violet of her eyes, the smile of her sweet lips. Standing in the desolate dusk, with the eager air biting shrewdly in spite of his sheltering fur coat, Marcus began to feel himself a lonely outcast, a melancholy wretch, whose requiem sounded in the ceaseless cawing of homeward-flying rooks, the rustle of wind-swept leaves along the bridge, the thin, shrill piping of the robin's even-song.

When Miss Frere's white-capped maid came into the room with a lighted lamp, Marcus feared that she was going to shut out this paradise of warmth and happiness, this beautiful youth and equally beautiful adolescence; but the maid went away again without pulling down the blinds, and Dolly began on a fresh muffin, with a cormorantish determination to finish the dish.

Marcus turned from the leaf-laden, black water, with a shudder. There was a little wicket gate at the end of the bridge, then came a narrow path leading up to the window, then the window. After that—a new world.

window. After that—a new world. "Ugh!" Marcus's teeth chattered. "Those muffins of Dolly's look rather appetizing. I—I really think I'm a fool for stopping out here in the cold, when I might go in and have some. I

wasn't a bit hungry before; now, I am. Well, she can't eat me; I'll go."

He crossed the bridge, pushed open the gate, and walked slowly up the path. Dolly, seeing his tall, thin figure outside the window, let fall her partially demolished muffin with a shriek of dismay.

VIII

OVER THE BRINK

"I can assure you it's only me," said Marcus, apologetically, holding

up his packet of sweets.

Miss Frere came to the French window, opened it, and put out her slim, white hand. "Won't you come in and convince Dolly that you are not a burglar?"

"Thank you, thank you; if you don't think I'm an intruder. You're

quite sure I'm not?"

"Quite." She drew him over the threshold, and Dolly, standing on a chair, began to drag off his coat.

"Oughtn't I to put it in the hall?" suggested Marcus, with sudden help-

lessness.

But, as he asked the question, Dolly had already taken his hat and coat, and pushed him into the armchair. "There's half my muffin, Uncle Marcus"—she picked it up from the floor—"and you'd better eat it before it gets cold. Let me

scrape the hairs off for you."

From the depths of the arm-chair, Marcus, holding the half-consumed, hairy mass of dough which had once been a muffin, helplessly regarded his hostess, who, realizing his plight, rang the bell, and ordered more. "It is not often I have the pleasure of seeing you here," she smiled. "Was it the melancholy afternoon that led you to take compassion on me?"

"No, I'm sure it wasn't that, Uncle Marcus," broke in Dolly. "Papa and Whipple wouldn't let you experimentalize, and so you had

to come out."

"Dolly is right," said Marcus. "

am fleeing from tonics and Whipple and Dodds and myself—and other unpleasantnesses. As I couldn't put on a suit of armor, and mount a horse — Dolly knows what a bad rider I am—and pretend that there was a bridge to thunder over, I stood there until a spirit in my feet made me sneak across and look in at the window. Dolly shrieked like a penny whistle, and—here I am."

"Well, Uncle Marcus, isn't it much nicer here than out there, in that creepy-creppy, ghostly light, with bony fingers dragging you into the water?" asked the irrepressible Dolly.

"Much pleasanter," said Marcus, dreamily—so dreamily, indeed, that he failed to notice Miss Frere's eyes bent upon him with kindly solicitude.

When the hot tea and fresh muffins came, Miss Frere ministered to Marcus, and would not allow him to move from the sheltering depths of the arm-chair. "I was not aware that you had been ill," she said. "Now, Dolly, you must not worry Mr. Pendragon. I don't know what your father will say when he hears how many muffins you have eaten."

"I do," said Dolly, with a truthfulness born of long experience. "It's a nasty little word of five letters, beginning with 's' and ending with

'a,' and it—it hurts."

She approached Miss Frere, whispered the baleful word, and made a heroic effort to finish her discarded muffin before the fates could wrest it from her. Fortunately, at this juncture, a maid came to take her home.

"I don't want to go," pouted Dolly. "Uncle Marcus hasn't said anything interesting yet."

"What do you mean?" asked Miss

Frere.

"Oh, papa told mama, this morning, that he wouldn't be surprised if Uncle Marcus said something interesting to you, some day," said Dolly, with her arms around Marcus's neck, as she hugged him, fervently.

"I'll try to say something inter-

time." another Marcus esting, beamed at her with kindly blue eyes. The warmth, the brightness, the atmosphere, filled him with unwonted

joy.

When the rising wind began to howl around the house, Miss Frere drew the curtains, and shut it out—banished the cold blackness of the evening sky, the robin's melancholy pipe, the sullen stream, the barren beds where once the sweet flowers bloomed. She moved slowly about, bringing Marcus tea, preventing him, in spite of his protests, from rising to help himself; and, all the while, there was a tender, half-amused pity in her eyes. They seemed to say to him: "Poor, bewildered soul, escape from the darkness. Here is a happy haven and a refuge. Seek shelter from life's bitter storms in this abiding peace. Rest and be happy."

She was so fair to look upon, diffused so sweet a graciousness around her, that Marcus, abandoning himself to the intoxication of the moment, sat back in his chair, and, for the first time in his muddled life, gave himself up to the luxury of unrestrained happiness. If she moved, he followed her with delighted eyes; if she sat down, he watched the soft folds of her gown cling about her feet, the lamplight play upon her shining hair. An ineffable peace enfolded him as with a garment. All his life, he had noisily blundered about, buzzing hither and thither like a fly upon the windowpane. Lately, he had tired of everything, his constant cry:

"'Oh, earth! earth! hear thou my voice and be Loving and gentle for to cover me."

Until to-day, Marcus had never needed a constant companion; but, now, he felt himself to be faltering on the brink of loneliness, of aimless days wherein was nothing good or fair to see. Miss Smythe was right. This was the road on which humbly to set his feet. The domineering Dodds, the watchful Whipple, held him in their iron grip; there was no

escape from them; no es— But he had escaped—for the moment—into this oasis, this fair garden of delight.

Dolly returned for a final farewell a farewell the enthusiasm of which was tempered and discounted by an inner consciousness of muffins. looked very pretty in her little, closefitting blue cloth hood, trimmed with swan's-down. "It's a horrid nuisance for you, Uncle Marcus, but I have to go," she said, with a consoling hug. "I'm so sorry to leave you. I'm sure you didn't expect to see me here, but I'll give Sophie some of the sweets. You don't think it unkind of me to go away?"

"Certainly not," said Marcus, with evident truthfulness. "I must be going myself. I'll see you safely back."

Dolly looked at him with sorrow "That's very rude, and reproach. Why, you've not fin-Uncle Marcus. ished your tea! You must stay and talk about the parish and Mrs. Muxworthy's 'rheumatiz.' It isn't polite to go away, directly you've had all the muffins you can eat. And you lord of the manor, too!"

"But you're going," feebly muttered Marcus. "Look at the muffins you've hurried into the unknown."

"But I don't want to go, and I can't help myself. Besides, you should never tell people what a lady eats. I've had only seven; and I must eat, or I sha'n't grow."

Miss Frere, amused by the child's unwillingness to permit Marcus to leave, smiled assent. From the little hall outside came the sound of Dolly's protracted farewells, the sharp remonstrance of the maid, who was tired of waiting, then the slamming of the front door, and Marcus's lagging step back to the drawing-room. How tired and thin and listless he seemed! All his movements were odd and bird-He appeared to be quite unconscious of his own quaint ugliness, his testy sweetness. Evidently, this man of vast leisure had never found time to study his own peculiarities. His smattering of scientific knowledge did not lead him anywhere. He was as unworldly as a child, and, deep down in the golden heart of him, lurked all kinds of flowers, which needed but the fructifying hand of Love to fill with blossoming joy his wilderness of empty days.

He returned as slowly as possible, in order to prolong the reëntering into such welcome sweetness—that sweetness which gripped his heart, held him fast, banished all self-inflicted cares. The arm-chair seemed his by right, the beautiful woman bringing him things to eat and drink, a dream of delight vouchsafed for a brief moment, to remind him of the possibilities of existence. When she moved toward him, the gift of her coming was meas-

hands.

Marcus's dreamy happiness was broken in upon by the pretty maid, who came in to remove the tea equipage. After she had gone, the silence became almost embarrassing.

ureless content; when she smiled upon

him and reseated herself, he smiled

back again and was as wax in her

"You don't speak," said Miss Frere, gently bringing him back from cloud-

land.

"Don't I? I beg your pardon. Speech seemed so unnecessary. Then, you speak, and it is the one thing wanting." He spoke more to the fire than to her, looking into the blue flames where Dolly, as a parting gift, had thrown a handful of salt. "It—it is so restful!"

"But isn't your life a restful one? You have nothing to do except—' A faint smile played about her lips.

"Except to be blown up, metaphorically and physically. But I'm tired of it—tired of it." He wheeled around, suddenly. "I'm a mass of perplexities. I thought Lady Fitzgibbon would help me, but she's away again."

"And you come to me to help you?"
Miss Frere's cheek glowed. "That is

kind and neighborly."

"But I didn't intend to—I really didn't." He could not tell her of that scene in the nursery. "I've been

wandering about, feeling that I am no good to any one."

"People in the village tell a differ-

ent story."

"Yes, yes, poor people; but you know that's merely a cheque-book matter, nothing else. The man who really gives is the one who parts with something he wants for himself. It is what it costs you to give, not the money value of a thing. Do you know what I was thinking of, as I looked in at the window and saw you and Dolly sitting here?"

"No, not any more than you know of what I was thinking in here, when I ought to have looked out, and did

not."

Marcus gazed into the fire again. "You can't imagine the feelings of a man who has never really been in love. and leads a sort of mechanical, humdrum life—the life of an ox in one of his own low-lying fields. He pastures, and pastures, and pastures all Winter comes, the grass Summer. grows thin. So does he. Cold winds blow upon him; he stands in a slough, without energy to move either to the right hand or to the left. Upon the pleasant, upland heights are meadows of asphodel, and he doesn't see them. Butcher Death appears, and there is an end of him. But, if some one had shown him the uplands when Summer began, if some one had said, 'Climb, climb, climb from these rank pastures, it might have been different.

"Ye—es, it might have been differ-

ent.''

"It isn't good for man to be an ox," dreamily continued Marcus, "any more than it is good for a woman to waste the treasures of her heart in solitude, to feel that she has no mate anywhere to whom she is all the world."

"No, it is not good. But"—she came to Marcus, and stood looking down upon him from the height of her gracious stature—"don't we all fritter away our lives? Don't we all begin with aspirations, ideals? Aren't we all going to live for some one, be everything to some one? Don't we gradu-

ally, day by day, begin to find out that our ideals fade away, leaving us unsatisfied, empty, longing for something to develop the good we know to be in us? Don't we all, in the seclusion of our chambers, when we are alone with God, pray that the world may not press too heavily upon us?" She put her hand upon his shoulder, and, light as her touch was, he trembled at it. "Don't we feel the burden of our loneliness, those opportunities which ought to come to us, but do not? Sometimes, God is very cruel to us, as we think, withholding our heart's desire lest we should weary of it and complain."

"God!" he echoed. "God!"

"Yes-God. The hand of God is on us, moving us, compelling us, leading us. If we are unhappy, the root of that unhappiness is in ourselves. It is caused by something we have done, or left undone. Are we not both dreamers, dreamers, dreamers, wrapped in silken luxury and ease dreamers who have awakened from our dream to go in search of happiness before old age grips us both? 'Bad are the times, and worse than they are we.' Cannot we both do something to make them, and ourselves, better?"

The man looked up; the woman "I—I am looked down at him. ashamed," he said, for the touch of her slim fingers brought light into his soul. "I am ashamed. My intelligence has rejected God; when I see you, look up into your face, hear you speak, my heart accepts Him. He shines through you, His creation, the witness of His truth. You are proof, tangible, visible, real. You speak with His voice-speak to me, stranded, desolate creature that I am—a thing of clay beyond the potter's molding hand, weak—irresolute—faltering despondent—warped—twisted—whimsical—useless. Can even the hand of God make me other than I am? Can it straighten my bent form, give me the vigor of manhood, lead me into the way of peace? Ah, no, it is too late!"

He began to shamble grotesquely about the room, carried away by his own lonely misery, then turned toward her with a smile. "I beg your pardon. I know I'm a whimsical, ungrateful beast. There's Hawtrey -Dolly—the child—you!"

"What am I to you?" The guestion broke from her in undisguised $^{\prime\prime}\,\mathrm{We}$ astonishment. have friends for years, but you have never needed me."

"I didn't know you. I realize what you are."

She smiled, faintly. "And now?" His shyness vanished as he plunged toward her. "Now I've realized it."

He stood aghast at his own daring. His heart within him moaned to the

answering winds without.

"Realized—what?" Her breath came and went quickly, as if she were trying to control herself in the light of this eccentric revelation.

He took his hands out of his pockets, and, tall as she was, towered above her. "Realized you! That's all. I—where am I? Oh, yes! I want to say something to you. May

"Ye—es," she faltered; "yes."

He drew back the curtains, flung the window open, and stepped into the darkness. The next moment, he reappeared, his eyes shining through the gloom. "An hour ago-it was only an hour ago-you beckoned me in out of the darkness. I came—for an hour."

She drew nearer to the window, in spite of herself.

"Will you stand in the darkness beside me, lead me out of it—into the light—forever?"

"Beside you?"

"Yes, beside me." He shrank back a step, but the light fell full on his face. From the wrinkled mask of that quaint ugliness, the man's soul looked out, the appeal in him, the love, the worship. For a moment, he raised his hands as if to draw her to him, then dropped them again. "No," he groaned, "no; it isn't fair—it isn't fair!" He turned brokenly away,

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to wander bareheaded through the

With a soft flutter as of dovelike wings, Marion Frere stepped through the low window, laid her hands in his, and brought him back into the light.

Marcus gazed at her, incredulously, tremblingly, until the joy in her eyes, meeting the joy in his, wavered into happy tears. "It is so dark, so dark out there!" she said. "The wind wails like a lost soul looking back for the happiness missed on earth. Listen! Ah, carriage wheels! Some one is bringing us down from heaven to earth!" Her eyes sought those of Marcus, with a smile.

"Save me from them," he whis-

pered.

The pretty maid entered. "If you please, madame, Mr. Pendragon's carriage."

"Your coachman must have gone to the doctor's, and learned that you were here. Are you going there now?"

"No; ah, no!"
"Why not?"

"I am going home—to be alone with you."

The maid had left the room. Marcus took her hand. "I love you, dear. I love you!"

She looked into his eyes. "'Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm, so that thou overcomest the loneliness of life and we be one forevermore.'"

He bent down, kissed her, and rushed into the hall.

The carriage rumbled away, and the fresh, cold air blew in upon her tender brow, as she stood listening to the departing wheels.

"Shall I close the window, ma-

dame?" asked the maid.

Marion Frere turned, almost fiercely, upon her. "No, thank you. I will close it myself—presently."

close it myself—presently."

She listened, jealously, as the sound of the carriage wheels died away. "It would shut him out. I will never shut him out again," she murmured, passionately; "never again!"

IX

COMING DAYS

THE next morning, Marcus was down at seven, vainly endeavoring to realize the wonders of the world in which he found himself—a new world, which was doubly bewildering after his sleepless night. It was all so different now from the even current of former uneventful days. But yester-eve, the weather had been dull, dreary, the wind blustering vindictively among the chimney-pots. To-day, the skies wept ceaselessly, and the gravel-walk in front of the house was filled with miniature lakes, which sprang up in a hundred hollows and ruts caused by the carriage wheels. The dripping laurels shook themselves disconsolately, and scattered raindrops far and wide. Dull, leaden clouds drove slowly across the sky in perpetual battle against the wind and the rain, falling apart, reforming, then pressing onward again with quiet persistency. To the ordinary observer, the outlook seemed sad enough. But nature is ever fond of surprises. Close by the window, on a pine branch, perched a bedraggled starling, short-tailed, close-reefed, saturated with wet, yet singing to the rain with sweet, persistent little trills, utterly unlike his customary raucous notes. He seemed to be enjoying some joke of his own, which rendered him indifferent to all considerations of weather, time or space. Occasionally, he rubbed his beak along the bark of the wet bough to sharpen his appreci-When he had ation of the joke. whetted his beak thoroughly, he darted down on the path, joyously assimilated a half-drowned worm, as if he were conferring a kindness by conveying it to warmer quarters, and, once more, flew up to the pine, to resume the hilarious appreciation of his own meditations.

Marcus greeted the starling with a friendly nod, rang the bell, and ordered his breakfast at eight. Mrs. Dodds, the housekeeper, on hearing of this glaring departure from customary rou-

tine, sent back the house-maid to say it would be ready at nine. Marcus, for the moment, was about to yield, then, suddenly, remembered that it behooved him in the future to become more assertive. "Tell cook," he said, quietly, to the house-maid, "that, if breakfast is not ready at eight sharp, she and Mrs. Dodds can leave at eleven." And the wondering house-maid fled to the kitchen, saying that she did not know what had come over the master, but, whatever it was, he evidently meant it.

At eight o'clock, breakfast was ready to the second, and Marcus ate it with a relish, Whipple hovering around him with grave approval at the discomfiture of the tyrannical Dodds.

After breakfast, he brought Marcus his coat and umbrella. "Are you ready for the laboratory to-day, sir?" he asked, sympathetically. "The roof's a bit leaky after the—the last experiment."

"N-no, I don't think so; not today," said Marcus, and affected to be deeply interested in *The Times*. He belonged to Miss Frere now; therefore, he was not morally justified in damaging her property.

Whipple went away, vaguely opining that "something was hup."

The next difficulty with Marcus was that he did not know how to get through the morning. An engaged man ought to know what to do with himself, but the position was so astonishingly new to him, and he had no literature dealing with the subject! Presently, however, he bethought himself of an engagement-ring; that was, undoubtedly, a step in the right direc-There were his mother's jewels in a safe up-stairs. He brought them down into the library, first locking the door before taking them out of their cases. Yes, here they all were. They had not seen the light for many years. Flashing diamonds, sheeny, lustrous pearls, opals of changing fire, rubies, sapphires, amethysts—how could he choose among them? He placed them back in their cases, and put the cases into his pockets. It would be simpler

to give them all to Marion Frere; these baubles pleased women, but could not add to her beauty. Her eyes shone with a sweeter light than any of them.

And so the dull day wore away until luncheon-time. Marcus had never before known the meal to be served with such celerity. The servants' thanks to a few judicious hints dropped by Whipple, was aflame with curiosity and fear. The mighty Dodds, tottering on her semi-regal throne, dreaded mysterious dangers. When Marcus ordered the carriage after luncheon, without discharging them all, the servants breathed again, and resolved to be more careful in the future. Mrs. Dodds, peering at Marcus from the end of the hall, discovered that he looked ten years younger, that he had suddenly developed a trick of smiling to himself. Shaking her head, she groaningly waddled away to the housekeeper's room, for she had seen similar symptoms in other men, and knew their fell portent. Her reign was evidently drawing to a close. thought of her "pickings," and shuddered.

Marcus, although longing to be with Miss Frere, called on several people in the course of his drive, and left a note for Hawtrey, explaining what had happened. Most of his neighbors thought that the bulging contents of his pockets were chemicals. The knowledge made them fidgety; they breathed a sigh of relief when he was safely off the premises. Others, noting his cheerfulness, felt glad that he was "coming out of his shell." It was not until the carriage stopped beside Miss Frere's dainty little house, and Marcus told the coachman to drive home without him, that his old servant, in surprised tones, ventured to suggest that it was still raining.

"Raining! Of course, it's raining. Don't keep your horses in the wet," said Marcus, hastily. "That chestnut mare never can stand rain."

The coachman drove off, and Marcus, waiting till the carriage was safely out of sight, skirted the garden, entered the park, and crossed the little bridge.

Thus only could he believe in the reality of yesterday. He halted just outside the window, and peeped in, but Miss Frere was not there. As he turned away with an exclamation of disappointment, she was at his side.

"I did not think you would come the front way," she said, rosy with raindrops. "When the carriage went on again, and you did not knock, I understood. See, the window is open, and Dolly is not here. Oh, what a long long day it has been!"

"How did you know I was coming this way, you wonderful woman?" he asked, as she began to unbutton his

coat.

"How did I know! My heart told me! my heart told me! That was how I knew. I have been like Sister Ann on her watch-tower, all day."

"I assure you I could not keep away any longer," he said, taking the coat from her, and allowing it to slip through his clumsy fingers. "I wanted to come to breakfast, but I thought you would not let me."

The coat fell unheeded between them; her hands were outstretched;

she looked into his face.

"I'm almost afraid to touch you, I'm such a clumsy bear." He took her hands in his, and reverently kissed her, then stood amazed at his own daring.

"Ah! I have been waiting for that—waiting all my life, Sir Lancelot. Now, I know that it is not a dream."

"Sir Lancelot! Oh, you're impossibly sweet. Sir Lancelot! I'm more—" he paused for a simile—"more like a Dutch oven than a knight in armor." The joy in him was beyond utterance, broke all bounds. He could only gaze into her eyes, and think of the coming days. She suddenly came back to realities, rang the bell, and told the maid to take away his hat and coat.

"The servants will begin to wonder why you come so often. Yesterday, you were here! And lo! to-day is as

vesterday."

"It can never be as yesterday. No other day can."

"Ah! You are disappointed, al-

ready. Mount and ride away again, Sir Lancelot." One glance at his face reassured her. "But why are you dotted all over with little parcels? You look like a burglar."

Marcus suddenly remembered the jewel-cases. "Yes, my figure is rather bulgent, isn't it?" He laughed, with sheer delight at having coined so atrocious a word. "You see, I have a dim idea that, when a man's engaged to be married to any one, the proper thing to do is to bring the lady jewels of silver and jewels of gold." He tumbled the contents of the cases, in eager haste, upon the table. "I brought all I could lay my hands on, and here they are. They are for you—every one of them. Put some of them on!"

"For me!" She gave one hasty glance at the jewels, and turned to him again. "You don't seem to see the cift I roolly wont"

gift I really want."

"Tell me, and I'll go to the end of

the earth for it."

"Oh, no, I cannot spare you for so long a journey." She led him to a mirror. "Look there, and you will find it." Marion Frere's melting, melodious laughter was good to hear as her meaning dawned upon him.

"You really are most wonderful—a most wonderful woman. You prefer me—a poor, uncut stone without any sparkle—to those shining gewgaws?"

"Yes, I prefer you, although they

are very beautiful."

"I'm not."

"They have no heart."

"I have only just found mine."

"They shine coldly. You—why, you are positively radiant. You tremble and glow and look at me as if I were your world."

"So you are—the whole of it."

"Ah, yes; and you love me! They annot."

"I love you. Select one of those rings, and wear it as a token. Better put the others away until we are married."

"Married!"

"Yes—we must be married soon—in a—in a day or two. Why, I'm forty. That leaves me only about thirty

years, although I want to live a thousand, so that I can see you every minute of them."

"I'm at your bidding, most arbitrary of mankind." She shut her eyes. "Now, take my hand, lead me to the table, and I will pick out a ring haphazard. I will not discriminate between any gifts of yours."

He took her hand, as she opened her beautiful eyes and shut them

again.

"Do you think the ring is worth t?"

"Worth what?" She forgot to keep her eyes shut.

"The veiling of your eyes. Ah, now, all's right with the world."

She shut them again.

"Be quick," he implored. "The gems pale when you do not look at them."

Her hand hovered, like a white bird, over the table, fluttered down, and picked up an opal ring.

She opened her eyes, and gave a little cry of dismay. "Oh, it is so unlucky!"

"What is?" Marcus was frightened.
"An opal is always unlucky."

"It cannot be; you've looked at it. See, how its light pales and softens."

"Yes, I see, I see. The light of life has gone out of it."

He put the ring on her finger, and the warmth of her being brought back the light. "It wants a bath of milk," he said. "I had forgotten that. If you put opals in milk, they revive. It is what is called 'sick."

There came a hasty ring at the door, and Dr. Hawtrey was shown in, brimming over with excitement. His eye fell on the jewel-strewn table. "Then, it's true, Marcus, true? I got your note, and hurried on here—left the patients to take care of themselves. You most extraordinary people! You—you wonderful beings! I—I hardly know which to congratulate more than the other. Oh, yes, I do, though! yes, I do! Marcus, Marcus you skinny pessimist, you railer against matrimony, every

blessed saint in heaven must have been watching over you to bring you to—her! I—I thought it was to be Lady Fitzgibbon."

"Ah! The blessed saints will want her back again!" Marcus took Miss Frere's hand. "Hawtrey, help me to

guard her!"

Marion put her hands in the doctor's huge paws. "You won't go away to Canada? You'll stay and help me to take care of him? He is so very helpless!"

The doctor kissed her. "We all are, without you. The last time I saw that shadowy Miss Smythe, she told me she worshiped you."

"Hadn't we better get married at once?" suggested the "helpless" Marcus.

The doctor was frankly shocked. He drew Marcus aside. "Have you considered the mystery of things?"

"What things?"

The doctor's hands went heavenward. "Ye gods! He's sublime! He knows nothing about frocks!"

"Frocks?"

"Yes, frocks. Don't you know that, when a lady contemplates matrimony, by some inscrutable decree of Providence moved to pity for dressmakers, she is suddenly bereft of all her clothes, that she has 'nothing to wear,' that she has to be newly clad, from top to toe, in those dainty devices and adornments which reveal the woman, but conceal the angel! Don't you know all this?"

"It hadn't occurred to me."

"It hadn't occurred to him!" The doctor's tone was full of compassion. "It hadn't occurred to him! He wants to get married, and he thinks he can do it in five minutes! Why, man alive, it takes months!"

Marcus groaned. "Suppose I meet with an accident in the meantime?" he queried, anxiously. "Can't we be married first, and get the things afterward? What are things?"

"Things," said the doctor, solemnly, "are things; and there's no more to be said! You cannot, as you so irreverently suggest, 'be married first,

and get the things afterward.' Give me the laboratory key. I want to make sure of you."

Marcus surrendered it, instantly, and the doctor handed it to Marion Frere, who gave it back to Marcus.

"If you are in such a hurry to get away from me," she smiled, "here it is again."

Marcus returned the key to her. "Well, perhaps we'd better wait a week," he said, with an air of finality.



YOU

No more for me the ways of life that lead
Through curtained wood and down the dim-lit lane;
No more the call of shadows, petal-shaped,
Caught in dim, colored cups that fade and feed
The earth, wistful of earth. And spread in vain
Are seed-sown webs, whitening the dew-drenched way.

But always you; the sun-lamped lane—and you!

The woods—and you! Shadows that rock all day
In painted bells—and you! Always your face
Is on the hills and in the nets of dew
Hung on gray leaves. Ah, all the dream-steeped way
Is wild with you! For I have seen your face.

ZONA GALE.



AN ERROR OF IDENTITY

CONCEIT knocked at the door of the house of Man.
"Who art thou?" called Man.
"Love," quoth Conceit; and drew his cloak closer about him.
Man peered out, but saw only the glittering, tinsel robe.
"Enter, Love!" he cried, and flung wide the door.
Conceit entered.



HARSH PENANCE

STELLA—What are you going to give up during Lent? Bella—Strawberries.



"No; Willie was trying about just now? Did he want the moon?"

THE READJUSTMENT

By Johnson Morton

T was with a sense of physical relief that Mary Penryn closed the door of her house, and found herself outside, in the glare of the morning sunshine. After a night spent relentlessly in the mental questionings that, in a nature as sound as hers. inevitably follow moral despair, the cheerful sights and sounds of the outside world brought to her a definite What had seemed—and, indeed, was—piteously vital in the night silences of four walls, took on a more proportionate shape when brought into contrast with nature's great elemental models.

That this would be but temporary, Mrs. Penryn knew well enough. She did not expect, or intend, to leave to nature the solution of any human problems, for she was neither foolish nor irresponsible; but she welcomed eagerly this lifting of her burden, and was thankful for the reprieve. So, she turned from the street into the sunny reaches of the Park, vaguely conscious of its emptiness, which brought a grateful knowledge that she would be alone and free to go over again, and, perhaps, more profitably, the train of thought which had kept her open-eyed through the night. For, of a sudden, Mrs. Penryn had found herself looking on life as it was. Her medium of contentment, belief, trust and happiness torn from her, for twelve hours she had faced reality with new, bare sight, and she smarted and ached with the pain of it. It had all come—this awakening, this knowledge—from such a little thing!

She had been out all the day before, and had hurried back just in time for

dinner. They were dining at home and alone-she and Robert-and, as she ran down, hating to be late, she caught up a package of notes and letters that had come during the day. All through dinner, they had been at her plate, for she did not care to read them when there was Robert to talk to. and he had been full of all sorts of agreeable news. So, she carried them into the drawing-room, and opened them, one by one. She remembered that she picked out the square ones first. This was an invitation; the second, a long letter from a cousin in the West—she put that away to read later; the third, another invitation. As she opened the fourth, Robert came into the room. It was in a pink envelope, and it stuck as it came out; the writing was queer and unfamiliar. She read on, and—oh, God, such things as it said! And there was no signature. There, in the fragrant morning air, it showed evilly, an unclean thing!

Her husband came forward.

"What's the matter dear?" he asked.

She recovered herself with an effort, and held it out to him.

"Isn't it disgusting, Robert? An anonymous letter—the first one I've ever had. It's about you. Don't bother to read it. Burn it with your cigar!"

But Robert fumbled with his glasses, and leaned to the shaded light. She watched him, intently. His lip curled, and he shrugged his shoulders.

"The writer—it's safe to say she, I suppose—doesn't write very pretty things, does she? She doesn't mince matters."

"This is better," he laughed, lightly. as he took a little gold match-box from his waistcoat. There was a flash of flame against the paper. "There, it's gone," said he, as he threw it into the fireplace, and drew his foot over the ashes. "Don't think anything more about it, sweetheart."

But she thought of nothing else; the contemptible meanness of the spirit that prompted the letter; its odious, veiled insinuations; and, while her husband lounged, half in shadow, at the piano, and let his clever fingers draw out fugitive melodies, the wife

sat silent, introspective, aloof.

Presently, Penryn got up; he sighed, and laughed a little. "But it's spoiled the evening, hasn't it, Mary? Let's call it off. I'm going out for a turn and do you go to bed. You look quite used up. I'll look in on you by-andbye."

He leaned over her, and his lips touched hers, lightly. She held him closely, and her arms clung about his

"Poor little girl," he whispered, as he kissed her again, and left the room.

There was a half-finished bit of knitting work on the table beside her, and Mrs. Penryn reached for it as she rose; but her passive fingers missed the silken ball, and it rolled across the floor. She bent to pick it up, and, as she groped for it, her hand touched some-

thing hard.

"Robert's match-box," she thought. "Careless boy, to drop it! Why, it's a new one! I wonder why he hasn't shown it to me." She held the glittering trinket to the light, and turned it over. There were his initials, in the script he always liked, "R. L. P.," and underneath-what was that? Other letters, clear and distinct—they photographed themselves on her ready brain; they were the very initials of that name she could never forget—the name mentioned in the letter!

Two hours later, she had told him all. "I must clear my mind of it, entirely, of every suspicion, real or groundless; it is necessary for me to tell you all I know, all I fear and all that I am afraid of fearing, and then," with a sudden, pale smile, "Robert, dear, all that you have to do is to tell me that I am wrong, and I shall believe you."

But her husband was looking at her.

curiously.

"My dear Mary," he began, "you are really the last person in the world who would believe me, if I didn't tell you the truth, and, as well, the last person to whom I should lie. don't look at life from quite the same altitude, you and I; we never did. look up at it, and you look down on it. You see more, it may be, but what I see is pleasanter. With all your keenness of intelligence and your vividness of vision, I don't think that you ever quite understood me—curiously enough, not as well as I have understood you. Perception isn't a moral quality, you know; at best, it's a knack, and I've plenty of knack, Mary," and he smiled, rather ruefully;

"it's perhaps my best coin.

"Now, I know that you are thinking unutterable things of me, and I'm going to speak the truth. I, too, have been going over this, since dinner, and, even if it hurts you terribly to hear it, I'm going to say, in so many words, that a great deal of what that beastly letter said was true. I met this girl some months ago-you know thatand she interested me. She is beautiful, she is clever, she is charming. saw much of her-you know that, too —and then I came to like her very Yes, I love her, in a way—not as I love you, Mary, my wife; but love it certainly is. You can't understand this, simply because you are not a man. You women, when you build an altar, build it to one god, but we—we put other images on the lower steps, and, while our worship may be but for the highest, we yet lay many an offering on the lower shrines."

His fancy made her restless. She could not help seeing that the idea

pleased him, as he went on.

"You always thought me more than I am; you've always credited me with vour own single-hearted strength. am not strong, I tell you; I never have been. What have I done to show it? Nothing. I paint a little, play a little, sing a little. I think I've published half-a-dozen stories, perhaps, that fell to earth, where they belonged. I've traveled a little, I've studied less. I dine, I drive, I play polo, sail, whatever comes to hand. Mary, I'm nothing but a loiterer, an idler, a pretender, and you know it."

She smiled at him, a little wistfully. "Go on, Robert," she said, and turned

her head away.

"You remember what your Aunt Isabel said to me, after you had taken me to Brattleboro to be inspected? 'You're a very dear boy, Robert, and I like you, but you are so very different from my old-fashioned ideas of what a man should be that I don't approve of you in the least. And the only possible reason I can see for your happiness and Mary's is that I approve of her too much! Between you, you may strike

a livable average.'

"But, seriously, Mary"—he stood near and looked into her eyes—"I'm perfectly willing to tell you, frankly, that I've been all wrong. I've made a mistake that not even a weak man should make; I've stepped out of the right path. I've wronged you, I've wronged that other woman, I've wronged myself. I won't make any excuse. But I'll try to do better, if you will give me one more chance. I say, 'I'll try,' because I won't make any promise that I may not keep—I see myself too well. Heaven knows I love you, dear, with all the best that's in me; but, too, it's in me to slip, and, in spite of my honest endeavor, the like may occur again; it's in my nature. So, think it all over, and tell me what I've to do.

"There!" His face changed, and his wife saw in it the smiling, boyish look that she loved. "I've said it—all—and I doubt if even you, my wife, could have been more brutally honest." His appeal touched, and at the same time irritated, her.

"You are forgetting," and she looked at him with solemn eyes, "my single altar! Stay," she added; "you have

been frank with me; I shall be equally frank with you. We are always taught, we women, that we must let no man realize our reserves; that we must even hold back something that even the man we love cannot find. Oh, in the light of truth, how vulgar and trite all this sounds! Listen! I'm going to tell you about myself. From the time I first saw you, I loved you fully, passionately, unreservedly; it was as if no other man had ever lived. I knew, in the flash of one moment, that I was meant for you, that you belonged of right to me. They told me this of you, and that; it fell on ears of stone. It was you I saw, you I loved; your qualities might be what they would. I saw beyond. With you, my very life began and ended. There was never a time when I saw you, that I would not willingly have made any sacrifice for you, and known myself happy in the doing. But there are things, Robert, my husband, that are fundamental, that lie at the base of the nature of every one, and, without which, there can be no fair life, no happiness, no hope; and, of these, the chief is honor. When we were apart, my honor was mine, and yours was yours; but, once we were joined together, that honor became ours—yours as much as mine; mine as much as yours. Robert, you have violated my honor, you have lied to me, deceived me, until you were found out, and, oh, my God! the horrible thought stifles me that, perhaps, if you had not been found out, you would be lying still. Everything is in ruins about me, now that that foundation stone has slipped away. These are the questions that ring in my soul: 'Can I trust you again?' 'Ought I to trust you again?' For a woman made up as I am, readjustment is a terrible thing. Oh, I have talked of it, and admired it, and suggested it glibly enough to other people, never dreaming that it might some day come to meto me, Mary Penryn, your wife. And all through you, the man I love!"

He held out his arms, eagerly, with supplication, but she stepped aside. "No, not now. I must think, think;

weigh my honor against my love; my duty against my need. Go away now, Robert; I must be all alone. I tell you, everything is in ruins. I must see what I can save."

"And I," said the man, pale and anxious, "I will wait. Don't think me a coward. I will do just as you wish. I am wrong, you are right. I leave it all with you."

She gave him her hand as they parted. It was cold, and tears stood on her cheeks; but she brushed past him, and he heard the key turn in the lock

Toward noon, the sun had gone into a cloud, and a chill wind had blown up from the east. Still, Mary Penryn walked on, her eyes haggard, her lips sad, but her steps as buoyant as ever, for she had reached a decision. She would not forgive; to overlook would be, for a woman of her tenets, simply moral degradation. She had been wounded in her most vital spot, by the hand that should have protected her. She loved him truly; and, all the more on this account, it seemed to her exalted mind that her very love was a weakness, to which her self-respect ought not to allow her to yield. It was the hardest sacrifice that her nature could make, and hers was a nature to which sacrifice was a creed. She realized that to abate one jot this attitude of moral defense would be to throw herself back into her husband's Forgiveness, too, was to her a temptation, so she would struggle against it, combat it, and conquer it Henceforth, her life should and self. be conducted on rigid lines of repression. She realized, all too late, that it was not for her to give herself unreservedly. She had done this once, and what she had given was neither wanted nor understood. To do her justice, she felt a real sympathy for her husband, and a poignant grief; but she refused to let her instincts, her feelings, do the work of her reason; and she argued to herself: "If he can yield lightly to his first, easy, patent temptation, one which he himself confesses, to be untrue to me, that is no reason why I should yield to the almost irresistible temptation to be untrue to myself, because I love him with my heart and soul." Specious reasoning, no doubt, but, just now, very convincing to her upright and somewhat austere nature. She resolutely refused to let her mind revert to the past, now that she had settled on a course of action—the happy past, wherein, at every turn, she saw her husband, handsome, kindly, gay; the suitor, the lover always; on that one object concentrated all her life!

Suddenly, for almost the first time, she looked about, and found that she had left the Park enclosure. The scene materialized for her curiously, like a mirage, out of air and sky. She was walking on a muddy road, where long lines were marked by telegraph poles. At the sides were straggling willows and burdock bushes, while now and again an empty market-wagon passed her, sinking deep into the ruts. There was a house, a cabin, not far off, and she realized, of a sudden, that she had had no food since the day before. She hoped they would give her a glass of milk there, of which a gaunt cow, tethered at hand, was a certain prom-

The house had around it a little fence made of whitewashed laths, and a gate fastened with a button. Inside was a tiny garden of sprouting plants and a few Spring bulbs in blossom. Mrs. Penryn closed the gate behind her, and stood at the door. A neat little woman came to it, and smiled at her request.

"Yes," she said; "do you come in, and I'll be glad to get it for you."

Inside, the plain room was fresh and clean. She sat down in a small rocking-chair painted yellow, with a pattern of bronze leaves at the top, and the woman came in from the shed with the glass of milk in her hand.

Mary drank it, and smiled. "It is very good," she said. "I have walked a long way, and I was hungry."

"Hungry?" the woman answered the smile. "But the milk's not enough!

Wouldn't you take a piece of my bread, too? I've made a fresh bak-

ing."

She broke off the brown end of a long loaf. The bread was good, and the comfort of the chair grateful, and Mrs. Penryn still sat there, watching the woman who busied herself about the stove.

The woman broke the silence first. She seemed rather unused to company, and grateful for the chance of speech. She had caught sight of the plain, gold band on the hand from which Mrs. Penryn had drawn off her glove.

"Are you a married woman?" she

asked.

Mary looked up, startled; so straight went the question to her thoughts.

"Yes, I am," she answered, turning to the other; "but why do you ask?"

The woman smiled at her again, in a

friendly way.

"Oh, I don't know, but I'd 'a' thought so, even if I hadn't seen your ring. There's something about you that made me think so. You look as if you had a lot to make you suffer. Well, so have I. It's through the men that happiness comes—and the sorrow, too," she added.

Mary looked at her with kindly interest.

"I've had my hard time, ma'am, and some would call it hard now, only that I'm used to it, and I'm always waiting. You see," she went on, with unconscious dignity, "my husband left me; he went off with another woman. She was younger and prettier than I be, and she followed him like a kitten. I'd been sick then, and couldn't look out for him as he ought to be looked out for, and so she came over, and she looked out for him, and one night he didn't come back, and there was a bit of a paper pinned on my roller-towel that told me he'd gone. He left what money he had, ma'am; he was kind that way. I've got on since as best I could, with my little garden and the cow and the hens and the washing that I do. Oh, it's not been bad, ma'am, only pretty lonely; but I'm waiting, I tell you, ma'am, for the time that he'll come back. They come back to them as belongs to them, if we'll only wait. He was a good man, too, save for this one fault, ma'am, and a bit of a drinking turn now and then, a good man."

"Drink?" said Mrs. Penryn. "He drank, too, and you—you loved him?"

"The ground he walked on, ma'am,"

said the other, simply.

"And you stay here and work and suffer and wait for him to come back when the fancy seizes him, when he's tired of the other woman, because you love him?"

There was a patter of feet outside, and the knob of the door turned

gently.

"Yes," said the other, "and for one other reason." The door had opened, and there stood on the threshold, just as she paused, a little boy. "Because

he's the father of my child."

Like a knife, the thought cut through Mrs. Penryn's soul. A picture of another little boy rose before her eyes—in his nursery at home. She pressed her hands to her head as the terrible meaning came to her. Yes, she, too, was a mother, and she had forgotten her own child!

The woman sprang to her side. "You look ill, ma'am! Some water, Willy."

But Mary Penryn stood up and put out both hands. "No, I'm not ill. I was, but I am well now, and I thank you—I thank you, I thank you for what you have done for me; for your bread, your milk, and, most of all, for what you have told me! You can't quite understand what you have done for me. Now, I must go, and very quickly. I am already due at home; it is long after my time. I, too, have a little boy and a husband. Will you let your little boy kiss me, please? There, you are not unlike my Geoffrey. dear. I'll go now; please just point me out the direction of the Park. I'll come again; I mean it—yes, I'll surely come again."

The woman laid a hand gently on her shoulder. "I think I do understand, ma'am. It ain't only education and brains that understands best, ma'am; it's sometimes just feeling."

Benton opened the door, and looked at her, inquiringly.

"Yes, I'm very late for luncheon, I know. Has Mr. Penryn come in yet?" "Yes, madam, he's been waiting an hour; he's giving Master Geoffrey his dinner in the nursery."

Mrs. Penryn ran up the stairs.



ROMNEY'S "LADY HAMILTONS"

FIRMLY he painted each staid sitter's head;
Broadly he handled mouth, chin, eyes and hair;
Made the polite a little more well-bred,
The chaste more cold, fairer the already fair.

But when he turned to Her—oh, then his brush
Into such raptures of fine form and hue,
With such a heat and pant of fire, would rush,
That his whole canvas a great poem grew!

VICTOR PLARR.



TITULAR CHRONOLOGY OF A GREAT MAN

TNFANCY	Baby
L Childhood	
At school	Jonesey
In the office	
	William Wirt Jones, Esq.
During the war	
	General William W. Jones
On the stump	"Our distinguished fellow-citizen"
In Congress	Representative William W. Jones
After the landslide	Ex-Congressman Jones
	U. S. Consul W. W. Jones
Pensioned	
Superannuated	Old Bill Jones
In the obituary column	"A once-famous soldier and politician"



"LUCKY AT CARDS, UNLUCKY IN LOVE"

SAM—Dat gal o' mine say she won't hab me.
Pete—I doan' play no moah poker wit' yo' till yo' git another gal!

BALLAD OF THE QUEEN'S PASSING

By Theodosia Garrison

HE young Queen turned on her carven bed,
And spake to her maidens three:
"My day that was bright with too much light,
It hath ended drearily,
And nor sage nor priest hath brought the least
Poor word that might gladden me.

"I have lived my life as this white rose
That withers within my hand;
None might intrude on the solitude
Where the gardener bade me stand;
And naught might bloom in the little room
They gave me of God's wide land.

"I sat too cloistered for life to touch,
Too distant from grief and mirth;
I have lived as far from things that are
As a soul that knew no birth,
But hears afar from its distant star
The clamor and crash of earth.

"My minstrels sing me the joy of life—
I know it an empty word;
I catch your blush in the music's hush,
I hear with a heart unstirred,
As one might be by the melody
And wordless notes of a bird.

"Yet, now that I lie, a broken rose
That hath but a moment's grace,
I think too long of a certain song
One sang in the market-place.
Oh, fast we rode, yet the song outstrode
And distanced the charger's pace.

"And all night long, as I wake in bed,
The voice in my ears is loud;
I see the grace of the singer's face
As he leaned from the silent crowd;
And I feel a start in my deadened heart
Like a live thing in a shroud.

"And because I crave no greater thing,
Why marvel the wish should be?
I would hear at last, ere life hath passed,
And I give Death gramercy,
The song that came like a swift, sweet flame
Through the empty heart of me.

"And you, my maidens, who serve me well,
Though you might not love me, heed:
I ask this thing of your pitying—
That I hear this song indeed,
And some far day, an the dead may pray,
I shall cry to God your need."

The young Queen lay on her carven bed—
A flower the snows incase—
And the white moonlight that pierced the night
Had less of white than her face,
When, through the gloom of the shadowed room,
Came he of the market-place.

His hair was black as the middle night,
His eyes as the sea were blue;
He looked at her with the look they wear
Who have gained from life their due;
And burned in his eyes the glad surprise
Of fantastic dreams made true.

Anear, in the chapel, her maidens prayed.
He stood by the white Queen's side;
His voice was sweet as the bridegroom's feet
To ears of the listening bride,
And low each word as a far bell heard
Through mist of the eventide.

He sang the song of the bird that yearned For the star he could but love; That beyond the flight of song's poor might, The space of the worlds above Might never guess of his loving's stress, Though the bird-heart broke thereof.

He sang the song of the breaking wave
That looked in the white moon's face,
And felt the might of her beauty smite
Like pain, for a little space,
Ere she went her way to the rim of day,
Nor dreamed of a love so base.

The moonlight fell on the carven bed—Starlight and moonlight sheen!
Like flame astir were the eyes of her,
Though her lips were still, I ween;
And he sang of one by love undone—A singer who loved a queen.

Anear, in the chapel, her maidens prayed
For peace of her passing's sake;
They might not hear, though they knelt so near,
The song of the singer break,
As a dream may flee and cease to be
When the dreamer starts, awake.

They found her cold on her carven bed,
The maidens who served her well;
And in her smile was the bliss the while
Of a thing too sweet to tell,
And they marveled sore the look she bore
Of a joy ineffable.

But nevermore, in the market-place,
One sang to the great and mean;
He may not stray in the common way,
Who on heavenly heights has been,
And he may not sing a trifling thing
With lips that have kissed a queen!



HIS EGO-ALTITUDINOUSNESS

BUT," mildly interposed his friend, "you will allow that Milton was a greater poet than yourself?"

"Yes, in certain respects," magnanimously replied the bulging-browed versificationist. "I understand what you mean. To be really great in this unappreciative age, one must be dead. I am alive; otherwise—"



STILL MORE AUTOCRATIC

KNICKER—Didn't he find it hard to return to civil life, after commanding in the army?

BOCKER—No, indeed. He got a position as janitor.



UNIMPROVED PROPERTY

KROMEYELLOW—What will you give me for the picture?

KIENSELLER—Ein tollar und a helluf.

KROMEYELLOW—A dollar and a half! Why, the canvas cost me two

dollars and seventy-five cents!

"Dot's all right; it vas clean ven you got it!"

LACHRYMÆ AMORIS

ONE night I wept as if a child were dead.

The whole earth's frantic murmur reached my ear
As empty whispers, neither far nor near,
And one dumb omen through my sorrow fled,
For I heard naught of what the whispers said,
Save this: "Thou lovest, and he is not here;
And thou wilt weep, wilt weep until no tear
Is left thee where thou liest on thy bed."

Those tears were little seeds and souls of things,
That in the darkness fell into the ground;
And, if one cherish them, they will abound
In tentant bud and glorious flowerings.
Oh, were some gardener to wait and tend
My tree of love would blossom without end!

FLORENCE BROOKS.



A SENSE OF VALUES

MOTHER (to her seven-year-old son, William, who has been growing free of speech)—Billy, dear, I will give you ten cents a day for every day you don't say "darn fool."

HAROLD (little brother of five, with superior air)—Humph! If "darn fool" is worth ten cents, I guess I know words that are worth a quarter!



THE REAL THING

HEWITT—I borrowed a policeman's uniform, and put it on the other day.

JEWETT—What did you do then?

"I don't know; I immediately fell asleep."



- THE professor was half an hour late to his lecture on cruelty to animals, and kept his audience in suspense."
 - "What caused the delay?"
 - "He stopped to see a dog fight."

A LUNCHEON AT NICK'S

By Kate Jordan

(Mrs. F. M. Vermilye)

HE snow fell straightly and sleepily, the big fire burned with an embracing rosiness, the clock ticked like an old gossip who lisps and whispers. There were worse places in New York than the Union Club on this white, Winter day.

Tom Duncan saw something in the heart of the fire which interested him. His clear-featured face, tanned like a Moor's and with eyes as dark, was sunk upon his breast. A pleasant memory had given his gaze an unusual softness. A daily paper in the grasp of his languid fingers trailed on the floor.

A man, in passing, bent over him.

"Not hunting tigers now, Tom? By that look on your face, I'd say you heard the angels, à la Little Eva and Uncle Tom."

"Sit down, Nick. Smoke one of mine."

"Now for an explanation of that seraphic expression," said Nick, settling himself in a chair, his feet hang-

ing over one arm.

"As if I heard the angels, you said! Well, I did, Nick. I heard a woman singing." Tom lifted the paper. "What vistas in memory a newspaper paragraph can unclose! I've just read that Madame Ardelli is in New York—her first visit to America."

"So, during your ten years' absence, you've done something more than swelter in African jungles? Where

did you meet her?"

"Paris — eight years ago; young widow then, and just about to make her début on the stage. She was an Italian, named Bianca, with eyes like all the poems of Byron and Swin-

burne rolled together; a fascinating study—a sphinx in the body of a woman."

"Going to fall in love with her all

over again?"

Tom shook his head, with decision.

"Revivals are never successes. She's eight years older, and so am I. But I've a hundred questions I'd like to ask her."

"A good fairy ought to bring the

meeting about."

"Ah, yes! say a tête-à-tête luncheon, where I could study Bianca over a table, as she nibbled an olive, or dallied with a grape."

"Ask her to lunch with you."

"Not without the proper setting. Fancy us at Sherry's or Delmonico's! It would be like looking at a gathered rose, framed in loud gilt instead of between the yellowed leaves of an old book of poems—Rossetti's, for preference."

"Atmosphere means a lot to you."

"Yes, Nick. I'm a hunter by instinct, and wouldn't have the leopard change his spots for anything; but I've never got over being a poet. Now, I know just what I'd like: Take a snowy day like this, New York shut in by the whiteness so that it seems in a trance, the cars banging along, but with the brazen gongs muffled. It is so quiet!" He half-closed his eyes as he sketched the picture in his mind. "Here we have a nest of rooms—an artist's home, let's say; the rooms are high up in a big building, the neighborhood old-fashioned, out of the way; from the great north windows one sees the snow-packed roofs, smoke, steam;

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and, as twilight comes, electric lights winking in the whiteness, singly and in clusters. Ah, it's a fairyland, and New York seems a million miles away. rooms are dim, luxurious; nothing but candle-light is allowed there; a piano yawns in a shadowed corner; there is an excellent servant, who seems to have neither eyes nor ears, as he comes and goes. I see myself there at luncheon; the table winks with glass and silver, champagne creams and bubbles, and opposite me is a woman with dark, beautiful eyes that are triolets and quatrains of love. How exquisitely she talks, and how tenderly I listen; or how tenderly I talk, and how exquisitely she listens!" Tom shook himself, with a sigh. "Ah, such a place would make the revival a poem!"

"Do you know, by Jove, your description fits my studio exactly?"

cried Nick, in amaze.

Duncan grinned at him, defiantly. "I know it does."

"Well, have your luncheon at my place; I bestow it upon you."

"I meant you to."

"You've been hinting all this time?" Nick asked, in a flat voice.

"Shamelessly."

TT

The powers arranging the weathermenu were kind to Tom. Three days later, as his hansom took him to Nick Compton's studio, in the neighborhood of Washington Square, it was snowing again in the soft, spiritless fashion he loved. He was unadulteratedly content, shot with anticipative thrills, as the lift took him up, and he stepped from the damp, stone hall, a few flakes clinging to his shoulders, into an atmosphere of Eastern luxury. The vague tints from old rugs were there, the winking luster of brass and copper, riotous pinks and blues in Algerian studies, the flashing whiteness of minarets, and the scarlet of many turbans in Moslem scenes.

In a draped alcove, the round mahogany shone in splashes between the squares of embroidered linen; there were twinkling candles under deep-red shades, and a low dish of Egyptian silver crowded with red roses. Through the close curtains, the snow could be seen, falling dreamily.

"Charming, Finch," Tom murmured to the immaculate servant, who seemed to attend to his duties while

being, in a sense, non-existent.

He seated himself before the fire, and, as the poetry and invitation of the place captured his senses, his content left him. Madame Ardelli would be only a pleasurable mental problem. He was a fool to experiment, raking over old ashes, to ask the Past to lunch with him. Decidedly, he and she would be a dreary twain. Ah, that he were waiting for a woman whose touch would mean life, whose glance could, by magic, fling wide the door of his untenanted heart, and let the sun of her personality stream in!

It was twelve minutes past the hour when Finch came in with a letter. Madame Ardelli could not come; the snow, her throat, her concert, her manager——

"Oh, damn!"

Tom thrust his hands into his pockets, and pranced. The word is literal. He kicked a chair, because it was necessary to kick something.

"Lord!" he said, glaring at the Winged Victory; "how can I ever face Nick? What a laugh there is on me! Nick will keep quiet, though, if I ask him. But what about this Finch?"

A hope came to him. Finch was a new man, and had been with Nick only a week. Perhaps, by the time he came in contact with the servants of his friends, he might have forgotten this. And now-what to do? Tom walked the length of the studio, went into the next room, into Nick's bedroom and out again, tempestuously, for five minutes. He kicked whatever appeared in his path. Still beset by indecision, and hating the sight of the arranged table, he flung himself into a chair by a big desk in an inner room, his brow like thunder. He upset a heap of photographs, and began an inspection which was only a part of his frantic mood. The horrible consciousness that the impeccable Finch was waiting in the kitchen, quite op-

pressed him.

The photographs were chiefly of models and burlesque actresses. Many of them had been taken by Nick for studies. None of them was more than a shadow to his angry eyes until he saw one, the largest of all. This he looked at attentively, just as he made up his mind to call Finch and lunch in

sumptuous solitude.

The picture showed a girl of twenty, or a little more, as Cupid. She wore the usual costume and gauze wings, but the face was of such poetic and unusual beauty that it affected Tom like some of the dreamiest strains in "Musica Prohibita." Her hair, shot with light, made a glittering tangle across a brow like Clytie's; there was an Egyptian calm under the long, narrow eyelids; the curled mouth was poutingly sad, as if Cupid had just uttered some word of passionate regret for his broken bow; the chin, held up reliantly, showed the round, col-Over the pretty, umned throat. crossed feet, a name was scrawled in thick black, as if written with a match, "Merrily yours, Dolly Asquith." That a girl with such a face could sign herself, "Merrily yours," caused Tom to experience a little shudder; but, then, she was Dolly Asquith, the dancer. The photograph was still in his hand as he touched the bell. Finch hurried

"The lady I expected is detained, Finch," he said, with a poor counterfeit of a careless smile; "I shall lunch alone."

He looked at Dolly's face as he sat at the table, and, after a second's hesitation, propped the photograph against the roses.

"You're better than nothing," he said; "you'll bear me company. How do you come by those eyes, where the sadness and wisdom of centuries seem to dwell? I'll wager you're related to Pharaoh! How do you come by that sensitive mouth? What would it say if it could speak to me?"

He took a sip of sherry, finished the kingfish, and pushed his chair back a trifle from the table.

Finch knocked and entered, but with nothing in his hands. He shut the door, carefully.

"The lady has come, after all, sir."

"The deuce!"

"But she asked for Mr. Compton, and she has a portmanteau with her."

"What name did she--?"

"She didn't say, sir, and I didn't think it necessary to ask. I recognized her from the photograph, sir." And Finch glanced, with imperturbable dignity, at Dolly against the roses.

An electric comprehension shot

through Tom. He smiled.

"Yes, of course—of course; quite right. I'll see her. Keep the fish hot."

He hurried out to the hall, which was furnished like a room. On a divan under a temple lamp, burning like a big, red eye, he saw the original of the photograph.

"Miss Asquith!" he exclaimed, gladly. "You arrived most opportunely, though Mr. Compton isn't in."

"Isn't he?" she asked, staring at

"No; but I've heard so much of you, though I've not yet seen you at The Folly."

"Haven't you?"

"I'm delighted to play host, however," said Tom, gaily; "I expected a friend to luncheon, but have been disappointed. I hope you won't mind this invitation at a moment's notice. Won't you come in?"

"Thank you," she murmured, "but I can't stay very long. I just wanted to see Nick a moment. I was on my

way to a train."

"But you can stay and lunch with me. Oh, surely! Please don't say no. Finch, take Miss Asquith's bag, and see that she has everything she wishes."

Dolly was studying him with frank curiosity, her hands in the pockets of her tan rain-coat. She showed her small, intensely white teeth in the most delighted, childish smile he had ever seen.

He went back to the studio to wait for her. After the sense of disappointment that had taken possession of him, he became so jubilant that a few waltz steps were needed to do justice to his elation. He was whirling around, when he heard the clapping of hands at the doorway, and Miss Asquith came in.

"Come on!" she cried, with a ringing laugh; and, in a moment, they were skimming around the studio in a wild dance, while Finch sedately carried in

the fish.

When they paused for want of breath, she flung herself on a heap of pillows with an artless insouciance, laughter bubbling from her lips. Tom looked down at her with the frankest delight. With her hat and veil removed, she outshone her photograph as the real landscape puts an etching to shame. She wore a perfectly cut, black serge gown, with boyish collar and cravat, and a bunch of violets was fastened at her belt. She was piquant and correct, save for the numerous rings she wore.

"Oh, I'm so glad I came!" she cried. "Isn't this place gorgeous? Luncheon, too! I'm in luck. I'd like to send the girl that stood you up a vote of

thanks."

She winked roguishly at her photograph as she sat down at the table.

"Looks quite at home. Do you think it does me justice?" she asked, turning her face frankly to him and assuming a pose.

"It's but a faint shadow of you,"

said Tom, honestly.

"Oh, but the ankles! They're the limit!"

"A libel, I'm sure," he said, filling

her champagne-glass.

"Well, rather," and she tossed her beautiful head; "but I forgot. You haven't seen my turn."

"Are you good?"

"Well," and she smiled, naïvely, "judging by the notes I receive, I'm the whole show at The Folly. There's no one else in it."

"Dance for me, later," begged Tom; "I consider my education neglected

until I, too, can properly rate the photographer."

"Maybe," she smiled; "after I've

had a little more champagne."
"Do you like the fish?"

"It's dandy."

"We have mushrooms in the chafingdish for an entrée. I hope you're as fond of them as I am."

"They're elegant; I never can get

enough of them."

"The partridge," said Tom, with undisguised laughter, "really, I think you'll find the partridge very stylish!"

She stared at him with a winsome reproach and sadness, her fork half-

way to her mouth.

"You're guying me," she murmured. "Oh, I know I make mistakes. No

one tells me the difference."

"Dear child," said Tom, tenderly, taking her hand, "as you look at me, your eyes sheltered behind your lashes and swimming in light, you are a permanent excuse for misused adjectives, I assure you. You look as if you could feel; you look as if you had soul depths. This ought to be enough. Goethe and Heine found it enough."

"I never heard of that firm," said

Dolly, regretfully.

"Some day, I'll tell you more about them," Tom promised, while he thought he had never seen a more enchanting smile than that which spread, like a little wave, from eyes to lips; "in fact, Dolly, I hope to have many talks with you and to know you well. Don't you think we might become great chums—great friends?"

great chums—great friends?"
"Maybe." She drew her fingers
from his clasp, and began idly moving
them on his hand as if she were playing the piano. "What's your first

name?"

"Haven't I told you?" Tom cried, in mock horror. "Good heavens! we've known each other nearly half an hour, and I haven't told you that my name is Tom!"

"'Oh, Tommy, Tommy Atkins,'" she hummed; then: "What's your busi-

ness?" she asked, ingenuously.

"Well, if I have any profession," he said, lightly, "it's murder."

"Murder!" she gasped, pushing her chair back. "Oh, if I'd known that!

My heavens! murder!"

"Don't be alarmed. I've never yet slain a charming actress, so you're quite safe, dear little girl. I've been killing lions and tigers in Africa for years. When I haven't been killing them, I've been killing time."

"Oh, you were fooling! My, I had a scare! And you were in Africa?" she said, as she tranquilly sipped some champagne. "What salary do you

get for killing tigers?"

"None at all."

"So much apiece, I suppose," she hazarded, her eyes all blueness and wonder.

"Oh, you're delicious!" and Tom's laugh rang out; "you're perfectly bewitching! No, Dolly, I made no money at that profession; instead, I spent a lot."

"Are you rich?"

"I think you'd call me rich. That depends so on one's point of view. This partridge is just right. What do

you call rich?"

"Well, I call Ned Van Piper rich. He gave every one of the chorus a sunburst for Christmas. Oh, they were grand! I adore sunbursts, don't you?"

"I'll send you one to-morrow."

"Really? Or is this a case of 'Oh, go on, you're only fooling'?" Her eyes were sparkling. "I don't think a girl can have too many sunbursts, you know."

"Neither do I. Have a cigarette?" "Um—I'd love one with the salad.

Won't you light up, too?"

He moved his chair around to her

side, a cigarette in his fingers.

"You're the vestal with the light," he said, with laughing mockery; "so come to my aid." And he touched the cigarette to hers.

"'What's a vestal?"

"No matter." He continued to gaze into her eyes. "May I?" he asked.

"What?"

"Kiss you—just there," and he touched the point of her chin.

She flecked his fingers away.

"Don't get gay, Thomas!" she said, with a shrug, and went over to the fire; "let's have the coffee here."

She sank into a deep chair, and half turned from the blaze, watching the falling snow without. Tom sat beside her, leaning toward her, confidentially.

"Makes me sleepy—the snow," she said, her fresh lips yawning like a child's, her eyes closing; "it's just like the sea—that makes me sleepy, too."

Something about her in that moment appealed overpoweringly to Tom. The edge of the adventure became blunted when he regarded her as a human being, a girl of twenty, and not as Dolly Asquith, the dancer. She was here alone with him, at the mercy of his mood. Their very familiarity—and they had been strangers but an hour ago—had something ugly in it, something with a hint of tragedy.

"Ah! lazy, lily hand, more bless'd If ne'er in rings it had been dress'd, Nor ever by a glove conceal'd!"

These, and other lines by Rossetti, would creep into his mind. Why should "Jenny" haunt him now? had not read the poem in a twelve-He forcibly pushed the thoughtful mood from him. What a fool he was! Dolly would mock him if she knew he felt sorry for her. Sorry, when she had just finished a lunch where "wine was opened!" When she had a new possibility on her string named Thomas Duncan; while her hands blazed with a wealth of rings, and she was promised a sunburst on the morrow! Dolly would call herself in great luck.

"What are you thinking about?" she asked, opening her eyes, sleepily.

"You look as sober as a judge."

"I've been thinking of you—strange thoughts," he said; and, lifting her hand, now unreluctant, he kissed it very tenderly. "Child, you have a power in you, a play of expression, a spirit behind your beauty that fascinates me. I want to know you better—I must. Will you dine with me to-night?"

"I'd like to," she whispered, her lashes falling; "but I can't."

"You want to know me, don't you?" "Yes," she said, her voice quivering; "I like you. Oh, I liked you from the first moment—better than I ought to."

"Then dine with me," said Tom, his

heart exultant; "why not?" "I can't—I—I daren't."

"Well, if I call for you at the theatre, will you come to supper with me?

Why do you hesitate?" "Do you really, really care for me?" she said, her shrinking gaze very ear-

nest, "or is it just because I'm Dolly Asquith, the dancer?"

"I picked your photograph from scores of others," he whispered, "and I am only conscious now of one wishto know you better. I've never seen a face with such witchery as yours. It fascinates me. Were you a dancer or a queen, it would be the same. are marvelously lovely."

He stroked her hand, tenderly. wish you were attracted a little bit to

me," he pleaded.

"I am," said Dolly, with sudden intensity, and something tragic in her eyes; "oh, I am! But there's something else, and I wish I hadn't met you to-day—yes, I do."

To his consternation, she covered her face with her hands, and her

shoulders shook with sobs.

"Dolly, what is it? What makes you cry?"

"There's something I must tell you about," she whimpered, so softly that he had to bend very close to hear. "You can help me make up my own mind. I came to-day to tell Nick we've been such good pals, Nick and I -that I was leaving The Folly; going going—to get married."

"Married?" he asked, a chill in the

"Yes. You know Quinn's big livery stables? Well, Andy Quinn. grew up together. I promised to marry him, and now-now," she whimpered, "I'm not so sure that I want to."

She started up, turned away, and faced him with defiant eyes.

"It would mean leaving the stage for good—giving up knowing nice boys like you and Nick, having suppers and larks, and all that sort of thing that I love. I'd have to settle down and be so quiet. Oh, how can I give it all up—the stage, the excitement, the lights, the fun of having a jolly life! It takes hold of a girl, you know, she said, desperately. "But I'd made up my mind to take the plunge with Andy, and now, to-day, this lunch with you, this knowing you, has made me wonder if it's worth while."

She tossed back her head, and began pacing up and down. Tom watched

"Here," she said, turning suddenly, her cheeks blazing, her eyes like bits of a blue, noon-day sky; "I'll leave it to you. Shall I quit this sort of thing, never see you after to-day, or-ornot marry Andy? I'll do just what you say." And she brought her little clenched hand down upon the table.

Tom looked uncomfortable. His spirits fell. "Why do you have me

decide?" he asked.

"Because," she said, with startling emphasis, "I like you. Shall I say good-bye to you, or not? Wouldn't I be a fool to marry Andy? Wouldn't I be a stupid fool?" she asked, with insinuating softness.

"Does this Andy love you?"

"Oh, yes; he loves me, all right; better than his life, I guess," she said, folding her arms and staring at the

"And what about yourself?

you love Andy?''

She hesitated, then looked at him,

miserably.

"Sometimes, I think I do. I know I could—maybe—if I could only make up my mind to quit this life, the stage and all the rest. What would you do, Tom?" she said, her voice becoming "If I leave here at once, I caressing. go straight to Andy. He's waiting for me at the train. What would you do?"

Finch knocked at the door.

"Mr. Compton is on the telephone, sir, and wants to speak to you for just a minute."

Tom moved to follow him, but Dolly laid her hand upon his arm.

"Tell me-before you go."

"When I come back."

"No," she said, with decision; "I don't want to talk about it again. What shall I do?"

She was very beautiful and inviting, and the look in her eyes made his pulses stir; but the memory of her as she had looked, when half-asleep and he had thought of "Jenny," rushed back to him, and, in that instant, he said farewell to her.

"Take the honest man who loves you, Dolly; take the safety, the home," he said, with a new seriousness.

"And you don't mind never seeing

me again?" she faltered.

"I mind very much; but, as one who desires your ultimate happiness, I tell you to leave the stage and marry Andy."

She laid her arm on the mantel, and rested her cheek upon it, as he hurried

from the room.

"Hello!" Tom called at the tele-

phone. "This is Tom, Nick."

"Oh, I say, Tom," he heard, "an awkward thing has happened. I was late getting to the club, and found a letter there from my sister Sally. She was passing through town, and wanted to know if I wouldn't have her at luncheon, and perhaps go up with her to Westchester to-night, and fetch you along. You know, she's so anxious to meet you! she's heard so much of your adventures with African lions—"

"Yes," murmured Tom; "and then——?"

"Well, by Jove! she's going to the studio, on the way from the Long Island train, to look me up. Deuced awkward, isn't it? I'm awfully sorry; but tell Finch to explain to her that I'm waiting now at Delmonico's. How's Bianca? What a grunt! Can't understand you. Well, good-bye. You can easily get rid of Sally."

Tom hung up the receiver, and stood

stroking his lip, thoughtfully.

"I don't understand—it can't be—and yet——"

He turned swiftly on the trail of an inspiration, and entered the room where Dolly's portmanteau stood. Two gold letters on its brown sides faced him—S. C. He walked into the studio, his face pale under the tan, his eyes sparkling.

His guest was still before the fire, and they looked at each other. She was slowly drawing off the many rings, her cheeks flushed, her eyes very

humble.

"I'm taking off my theatrical makeup," she said, very softly. "These belonged to the part."

Tom went to the table, and took up

the photograph.

"Will you explain this? You didn't sit for it?" he asked, in a businesslike voice.

"No; it's Asquith from the chin down. Nick can play tricks with photography that seem like black art. He put my head on that to amuse me. I'd no idea he'd one of them here."

"How interesting!" said Tom, handing it to her; "I must compliment you on your talent, Miss Compton. The stage has lost a wonder."

Sally stared at him, looking very

miserable.

"Please forgive me, Mr. Duncan. I went into this thing through sheer fun; and, now, I see that it might have turned out a very shabby trick."

Tom was still angry, though Sally was almost irresistible in her penitence.

"Yes," he said, with a dry laugh; "I might have made a thundering fool of myself. But, if you had an hour's amusement, surely I ought not to complain."

"But you came out of it with flying colors," she said, with one of her vivid smiles, "thanks to your innate goodness and really beautiful character."

Tom took up his hat and coat, but she stepped before him, and held out her hand.

"I don't blame you for being annoyed; but listen to me," she pleaded, like a repentant child. "I'd just come to town from a visit to the Nor-

mans, in Babylon. Life there was as slow as a snail. I came to Nick to make him take me to luncheon, and to try to capture you and him for overnight at The Barracks. His man didn't know me, you had this luncheon on your hands, you christened me Dolly Asquith as you greeted me. I fairly tumbled into the part, and slipped on the rings when I took off my hat. Now, wasn't it a temptation, when I knew I could act, and was eaten through with boredom, eh?"

"I suppose it was," said Tom, soft-

"And you'll come to The Barracks to-night with Nick?"

"I want to go—if you'd like to have

"You earned your invitation a few moments ago," she confided, "when you gave that silly Dolly such good advice."

Although Tom laughed, a little chill passed over him. "Let me be perfectly honest, though. Perhaps, I'm not quite as angelic as you fancy. Do you know, I came very near saying to Dolly: 'Send Andy Quinn to Halifax, and come to supper with me.' By Jove! suppose I had?"

"But you didn't!" she cried, flinging back her head, gladly; and she added, softly: "Oh, I am glad you didn't!"



A MEETING

THE wind that had cried all night
Was still, as the dawning broke;
A mist lay over the world,
That was filmy as far-blown smoke.
In the hour ere the birds awoke,
When the last star dimmed and set,
With never a sound from wind or wave,
The night and the morning met.

Like lovers methought they were,
Who, after long parting, meet
And look in each other's face,
With no word glad or sweet,
But with rapture too complete,
And a bliss so exquisite
That the sound of a half-sighed word
Were heavy to shatter it.

John Winwood.



HIGH PRAISE

HE—That was a great honeymoon, wasn't it? SHE—The best I ever had!



CERTAIN women look as if they would make better fathers than mothers.

HEART OF GOLD

By James Branch Cabell

HE most beautiful woman in all Paris!" cried the Marquis de Soyecourt, and

kissed his finger-tips, gallantly.

"Tarare!" cried the Duc de Puysange; "her eyes are—noticeable, perhaps; and, I grant you," he added, slowly, "that her husband is not often troubled by—that which they notice."

"And the cleverest!"

"I have admitted she knows when to be silent."

"And yet—" The marquis waved a reproachful forefinger.

"Precisely," said the duke, with

utter comprehension.

He was in a genial midnight mood, and, on other subjects, inclined to be discursive; the world, viewed through a slight haze of absinthe, seemed a pleasant place, and inspired a kindly and natural desire to say clever things about its contents. He loved de Soyecourt as he loved no other man; he knew him to be patient and longsuffering, even stolid, under a fusillade of epigrams and contorted proverbs; in short, the hour and the man for wild midnight talk were at hand. A saturnalia of flushed, pink-tighted phrases whirled in his brain, demanding and alluring utterance.

He waved them aside. Certain inbred ideas are strangely tenacious of existence, and it happened to be his

wife they were discussing.

"And yet," queried the duke, of his soul, as he climbed, democratically, into a fiacre, "why not? For my part, I see no good and sufficient reason for discriminating against a woman one has sworn to love, cherish and honor. It is true that several hundred people

witnessed the promise, with a perfect understanding of the jest, and that the keeping of it involves a certain breach of faith with society. Eh, bien! let us, then, deceive the world—and the flesh—and the devil! Let us snap our fingers at this unholy trinity, and make unstinted love to our wives!"

He settled back in the flacre to deliberate. "C'est bourgeois," said he; "bah! the word is the first refuge of the unskilful poseur! It is bourgeois to be born, to breathe, to sleep, to die; for, in which of these functions, which consume the greater part of my life, do I differ from my grocer? Bourgeois! Humanity is bourgeois! And it is very notably grocer-like to maintain a grave face and two establishments, to chuckle secretly over the fragments of the seventh commandment, to cry over spilt milk, and then—ces bêtes-là!—to drink carbolic acid. Ma foi, I prefer the domestic coffee!"

The Duc de Puysange laughed, carelessly, and waved aside the crudities of life. "All vice is bourgeois," he continued, and lighted a fresh cigarette. "It is sordid, outworn, vieux jeu! In youth, I grant you, the sowing of a few wild oats is as natural as the instinctive dislike every healthy boy entertains toward the Bible. In youth, it is the unexpurgated that always happens. But at my age—eheu!—the men yawn, and les demoiselles—bah! les demoiselles have the souls of accountants! They buy and sell, as my grocer does. Vice is no longer a matter of splendid crimes and sorrows and kingdoms lost; it is a matter of course."

With a little sigh, the Duc de Puysange closed his fevered eyes for a mo-

ment. He was acutely conscious, in a wearied fashion, of the many fine lines about them as he looked out on the deserted streets, where the glare of the electric lights was already troubled by a hint of dawn. Two workmen shambled by, chatting on their way to the day's business; a belated marcheur followed, with elaborate and somewhat unconvincing sobriety. The laughed, shortly. "I have no conscience, I think," he murmured, "but, at least, I can lay claim to a certain fastidiousness. I am very wicked"—he smiled, without mirth or bitterness, as he spoke—"I have sinned very notably as the world accounts it; indeed, I think, my name is as malodorous as that of any man living. And I am tired—ah, so tired! I have found the seven deadly sins deadly, beyond doubt, but only deadly dull and deadly commonplace. I yield the palm to my grocer, and retire with such grace as I may muster. Let us return to the temple of Madame Grundy, and take to heart the motto written there: 'Be good and you will be happy.' is the true creed, and she—O dea certe!—ranks the mighty ones of the world among her servitors. Ashtoreth and Priapus have gone into trade, and their divinity is a little draggled.'

His glance caught and clung, for a moment, to the paling splendor of the moon that hung low in the vacant heavens. A faint pang, half-envy, half-regret, vexed the duke with a dull twinge. "Oh, to be clean!" he cried, suddenly; "to have done with these sordid, pitiful little liaisons and sins!—to have done with this faded pose and this idle making of phrases! Eheu! there is a certain proverb concerning pitch, so cynical that I suspect it of being truthful. However—we shall see."

There was a long silence. The duke smiled, equivocally, at some hidden thought. "The most beautiful woman in all Paris?" said he; "ah, the most beautiful woman in all the world, is this grave, silent female with the great eyes that are as cold and as fathomless and as beautiful as the sea! And how cordially she despises me! Ma

foi, I think that if her blood—which is, beyond doubt, of a pale, pink color—is ever stirred, it is with loathing of her husband. To make her love me—as I mean to do—mon Dieu, it will be magnificent, incredible! Life holds many surprises for madame, ma femme, now that I am grown uxorious and—virtuous. We must arrange a very pleasant little comedy of belated courtship; for, are we not bidden to love one another? So be it—I am henceforth the model père de famille," ended the duke, as the fiacre pulled up before the Hôtel de Puysange.

The door was opened to him by a dull-eyed lackey, whom he greeted with an adorable smile. "Bon jour, Antoine!" cried the duke; "I trust that your wife and doubtless very charming children have good health?"

"Beyond doubt, monsieur," an-

swered the man, stolidly.

"Bon, bon!" said the duke; "it rejoices me to hear of their welfare. For the happiness of others, Antoine, is very dear to the heart of a father—and a husband." The duke chuckled, seraphically, as he passed down the hall. The man stared after him, and shrugged his shoulders.

"Rather worse than usual," said

Antoine.

Next morning, the Duchesse de Puysange received a moderate armful of frail, strange-tinted orchids, with the duke's card attached. He spent the afternoon selecting bonbons and wholesome books, "for his fiancée," he gravely informed the shopman. At the Opéra, he never left her box; afterward, at the Comtesse de Hauteville's, he created a furor by sitting out three dances with the duchess in the Winter-garden.

A month passed. "It is the true honeymoon," said the duke.

"He is mad!" said the world.
"I wonder—!" said the duchess.

The duchess was undeniably a beautiful woman. As they sat over the re-

mains of the luncheon—à deux, by the duke's request—she seemed to her husband quite incredibly beautiful. Seen through the wreaths of a meditative cigarette, there was something of the fantastic, something of unreality in her perfection; the filmy pink of her morning-gown blended imperceptibly into the blue-gray haze, and her gold hair made such a pale glory about her face that one involuntarily looked for the white, folded, heavy wings that should have touched their tips in a thin, Gothic arch behind her head. The duke, half-drowsily, identified her with a Preraphaelite watercolor; there should have been a row of her, all in the same attitude, he decided. Then, as the pleasures of digestion lapsed gently into the pleasures of sleep, she spoke, suddenly:

"Monsieur," said she, "will you be pleased to tell me the meaning of this

comedy?"

"Ma mie," answered the duke, raising his brows, "I do not understand."

'Ah," said she, bitterly, "believe me, I do not undervalue your perception. I have always acknowledged your cleverness, monsieur, however much"—she paused for a moment, a fluctuating smile upon her lips-"however much I may have regretted its manifestations. I am not clever, and cleverness has always seemed to me to be an infinite incapacity for hard work; its results are usually a few sonnets, an undesirable wife and a warning for one's acquaintances. In your case, it is, of course, different; the weight of a great name stifles cleverness and stupidity with equal impartiality. With you, cleverness has taken the form of a tendency to absinthe, amours and—amiability. I have acquiesced in this. But, for the past month---''

"The happiest period of my life!" breathed the duke.

"—you have been pleased to present me with flowers, bonbons, jewels and what not. You have actually accorded your wife the courtesies you usually preserve for the ladies of the ballet. You have dogged my foot-

steps. You have talked to me as—

"Much as the others do?" queried the duke, helpfully. "Pardon me, ma belle, but, in a husband, I had thought this very routine might savor of originality."

The duchess flushed. "God knows," she cried, "what men have said to me, or I to them, has been a matter of little moment to you for the past fifteen years! It is not due to you that I am still—"

"A pearl," finished the duke, gallantly; then touched himself upon the chest; "cast before swine," he sighed.

She rose suddenly to her feet. "Yes, cast before swine!" she cried, with a quick lift of speech. She seemed very tall as she stood tapping her fingers irresolutely upon the table; then, after a moment, she laughed and spread out her little hands, in a hopeless, impotent gesture. "Ah, Gaston, Gaston!" she said; "my father entrusted to your keeping a clean-minded girl! What have you made of her, Gaston?"

The question was an awkward one; and yet a great, strange, perfectly unreasoning happiness swept through the duke's soul as she spoke his name, for the first time within his memory. Surely, the deep contralto voice had lingered slightly over it?—half tenderly, half-caressingly, one might think. "It is an old, old saying," he suggested, with careful modulations, "that a woman dies when a woman marries."

"Some of them are not so fortunate," said she, a wistful little catch in her speech; "they only wish—sometimes—that the proverb had proved true." Her lips made a wan, uncertain smile, and, for a moment, her hand rested, half-maternally, upon his shoulder.

"Ma foi," retorted the duke, "if women continue to marry with such beasts as men, what can they expect?" He glanced upward for a reply, and his glance lingered idly, then curiously, then almost hungrily. The duke sprang to his feet, and caught his wife

quickly by both wrists. "What have I done with her?" he cried, in a shaking voice. "What have I done with her? Before God, Hélène, I think that I have given her my heart!"

Her face flushed in sudden anger. "Mountebank!" she cried, and struggled impotently to free herself; "do you mistake me, then, for a raddle-faced actress in a barn? Ah, les demoiselles have formed you, monsieur—

they have formed you well!"

"Pardon!" said the duke, with a faint click of the teeth. He released her hands, and swept back his hair with a gesture of impatience. He turned his back to his wife, and strolled to a window, where, for a little, he fingered the cord of the shade, and stared into the quiet, sunlit street. "Hélène," he said, in a level voice, "I will tell you the meaning of the comedy. To me, always, as you know, a creature of whims, there came, a month ago, a new whim which I thought attractive, unconventional, promising. It was to make love to my own wife, rather than to another man's. Ah, I grant you, it is incredible," he cried, as the duchess raised her hand as if to speak, "incredible, fantastic, unducal! be it; nevertheless, I have played out the comedy. I have been the model husband; I have put away wine and les demoiselles; for it pleased me, in my petty insolence, to patronize, rather than to defy, the laws of God and man. Your perfection irritated me, ma chérie; it pleased me to show how easy is this trick of treating the world as the antechamber of a future existence. It pleased me to have in my life one short space over which neither the Recording Angel nor Monsieur Prudhomme might draw a long face. It pleased me, in effect, to play out the comedy, smug-faced and immaculate -for the time. I concede that I have failed in my part. Hiss me from the stage, ma mie; add one more insult to the already considerable list of those I have put upon you; one more will scarcely matter. It is but an illplanned, ill-acted comedy gone wrong, ma belle—only a comedy. And yet,

cried the Duc de Puysange, in a sudden, puzzled voice, "I do not know—I' do not know—I!"

She faced him, with set lips. "So, monsieur," said she, slowly, "your boasted little comedy amounts to this

—only to this?"

"I do not know—I do not know," he answered, dully. "I think that, perhaps, the swine, wallowing in the mire they have neither strength nor will to leave, may yet, at times, long—long—"The duke snapped his fingers, and laughed, lightly. "Eh bien," said he, "let us have done with this dull comedy! Assuredly, de Soyecourt has much to answer for in those idle words that were its germ. Let us hiss both collaborators, ma mie."

"De Soyecourt!" she cried, with a little start. "Was—was it he that prompted you to make love to

me?"

"Without intention," pleaded the duke. "I have no doubt his finest sensibilities would be outraged by our indifferent revival of Darby and Joan."

"Ah!" said she; then smiled at some

unspoken thought.

There was an awkward pause. The Duc de Puysange drummed, irresolutely, upon the window-pane; the duchess, still smiling faintly, trifled with the thin gold chain that hung about her neck. Both felt their recent display of emotion to have been somewhat unmodern, not entirely à la mode.

"Decidedly," spoke the duke, turning toward her with a slight grimace, "I am no longer fit to play the lover; yet a little while, ma chérie, and you must stir my gruel posset, and arrange the pillows comfortably about the octogenarian."

"Ah, Gaston," she answered, raising her slender fingers in protest, "let us have no more heroics. We are not

fitted for them, you and I."

"So it would appear," the Duc de Puysange conceded, not without sulkiness

"Let us be friends," she pleaded. "Remember, it was fifteen years ago

that I made the mistake of marrying a very charming man——"

"Merci!" cried the duke.

"—and I did not know that I was thereby depriving myself of the pleasure of his acquaintance. I have learned too late that marrying a man is only a civil way of striking him from one's visiting list." The duchess hesitated and smiled, inscrutably. "And, frankly, Gaston, I do not regret the past month."

"It has been—adorable!" sighed the

duke.

"Yes," she admitted; "except those awkward moments when you would insist on making love to me."

"Ma foi," cried he, "it was pre-

cisely——"

"Oh, Gaston, Gaston!" she interrupted, with a shrug of the shoulders;

"why, you do it so badly!"

The Duc de Puysange took a short turn about the apartment, then whistled, softly. "And I married you," said he, "at sixteen—out of a convent!"

"Ah, mon ami," she murmured, in apology, "am I not to be frank with you? Will you have only—only wifely confidences?"

"I had no idea—" he began.

"Ah, Gaston, it bored me so frightfully! I, too, had no idea but that it would bore you equally——"

"Hein?" said the duke.

"-to hear what d'Humieres-"

"He squints!" cried the Duc de Puysange.

"—or de Crequy——"

"That red-haired ape!" he muttered.
"—or d'Arlanges, or—or any of them, were pleased to say. In fact, it was my duty to conceal from my husband anything that might pain him. Now that we are friends, of course, it is entirely different."

The duchess smiled; the duke walked rapidly up and down the room,

like a caged tiger.

"Ma foi," said he, at length, "friendship is a good oculist! Already my vision improves."

"Gaston!" she cried. The duchess rose and laid both hands upon his

shoulder. "Gaston!" she repeated, with an earnest, uplifted countenance.

For a moment, the Duc de Puysange looked into his wife's eyes; then, he smiled, sadly, and shook his head. "Ma mie," said the duke, "I do not doubt you. Ah, believe me, I have known—always—that my honor was safe in your hands—far more safe than in mine, God knows! You have been a true and faithful wife to a very worthless brute, who has not deserved it," he murmured, and lifted her hand to his lips. The duke stood very erect; his heels clicked together, and his voice was very earnest. "I thank you, ma mie, and I pray you to believe that I have never doubted you. You are too perfect to err-frankly, and between friends," added the duke, " it was your perfection that frightened me. You are an icicle, Hélène."

She was silent for a moment. "Ah!" said she, with a little sigh, "you think

so?"

"Once, then—?" The Duc de Puysange seated himself beside his wife, and took her hand, very gently.

"I—it was nothing." Her lashes fell, and a dull color flushed through

her countenance.

"Between friends," the duke suggested, "there should be no reservations."

"Ah, it is such a pitifully inartistic little story!" the duchess protested. "Eh bien, if you must have it! I was a girl once, you know, Gaston—a very innocent girl, given as most girls are to long reveries and bright, callow little day-dreams. There was a man—"

"There always is," said the duke,

darkly.

"Why, he never even knew, mon ami!" cried his wife, laughing and clapping her hands, gleefully. "He was much older than I; there were stories about him—oh, a great many stories—and one hears even in a convent—" She paused, with a reminiscent smile that was pregnant with meaning. "And I used to wonder shyly what this—this very wicked man might be like. I thought of him

with Faublas, and Don Giovanni, and the Duc de Richelieu, and those other scented, shimmering, magnificent libertines over whom les ingénues—wonder: only, I thought of him more often than the others, and made little prayers for him to the Virgin. And I cut a little picture of him out of an illustrated paper. And, when I came out of the convent, I met him at my father's. And—that was all."
"All?" The Duc de P

The Duc de Puvsange raised his evebrows, and smiled, encour-

agingly.

"All," she reëchoed, firmly. "Oh, I assure you, he was still too youthful to have any time to devote to young girls. He was courteous—no more. But I kept the picture—ah, girls are so foolish, Gaston!" The duchess, with a light laugh, drew out the thin chain about her neck. At its end was a little. heart-shaped locket of dull gold, with a diamond sunk deep in either side. She held it close, for a moment, in her pink-tipped hand. "It has been sealed in here," said she, shyly, "ever since since some one gave me the locket."

With a quick gasp, the Duc de Puysange caught the trinket from her, still warm and perfumed from the contact of her flesh. He turned it awkwardly in his hand, his eyes flashing volumes of wonder and inquiry. Yet, he did not seem jealous; no, nor exactly unhappy. "And never," he demanded, some vital emotion catching at his voice, "never since then?"

"I never, of course, approved of him," she answered; and, at this point, the duke noted for the first time in his life the strong, sudden, absolutely bewildering curve of her trailing lashes. It seemed so unusual that he drew nearer to observe more at his ease. "But—I hardly know how to tell you —but without him the world was more quiet, less colorful; it held less to catch the eye and ear. He had an air, Gaston; he was never an admirable man, but, somehow, he was always the centre of the picture."

"And you have always—always—?" cried the duke, drawing nearer and yet

nearer to her.

"Other men," she murmured, "seem futile and—and of quite minor importance, after him." The lashes lifted. though with a visible effort. They fell, promptly, "So, I have always kept the heart, mon ami. And-ves. I have always loved him. I sup-

The long, thin, gold chain - the slight link that seemed to bind them mockingly together, after the breaking of so many stronger ties-moved and quivered in his hand. Was it he or she who trembled? wondered the Duc de Puysange. For a moment, he stood immovable, every nerve in his body held tense; he knew the air about them to be vibrant and heavy with some strange, nameless force. Surely, it was she who trembled? Surely, this woman whose cold perfection had galled him these many years, now stood before him with downcast eves. and blushed and trembled like any rustic maiden, come shamefaced to her first tryst? Was this madness? Was it thus that men's blood pulsed and leaped and exulted in the cells at Charenton? Surely, it was he, the nineteenth Duc de Puysange, whose dry lips moved and crushed each other, and made no sound? Surely, without, all Paris laughed and worked and died, as it had done yesterday? Then, a great light broke suddenly upon the duke, and he knew that, for him, yesterday and the life of yesterday and the man who had lived it, were vanished, never to return.

"Hélène!" he cried, with a great,

tremulous, choking sob.

"Ah, my story is dull," she protested, shrugging her shoulders, and freed herself-half-fearfully, it seemed to her husband. "Even more dull than your comedy, mon ami," she added, with a swift, provoking smile. "Do we drive this afternoon?"

"Ma foi, yes!" cried the duke. He paused and laughed—a low, gentle laugh, pulsing with an unutterable content he had not known for years. "For the day, ma chérie, is——"

"Beautiful?" she queried, turning

at the door.

"No," said the Duc de Puysange—"promising."

Meanwhile, the duchess prepared for the drive, the duke walked in the quaint garden of the Hôtel de Puysange, in gleeful wise, and smoked innumerable cigarettes. Up and down a shady avenue of lime-trees, he paced impatiently, and chuckled to himself, and smiled benignantly upon the moss-incrusted statues—a proceeding that was, beyond any reasonable doubt, prompted by his own great happiness, rather than their artistic merits, for they constituted a formidable, broken-nosed collection of the most cumbrous, the most incredible and the most hideous specimens of sculpture the family of Puysange had been able to accumulate for love or money. Amid these mute, gray travesties of antiquity and the tastes of his ancestors, the last Duc de Puysange laughed and soliloquized.

"Ma foi," said he, "will life never learn to improve on the magazines? Why, it is the old story—the hackneyed story of the husband and wife who fall in love with each other! Life is a very gross plagiarist. And she—did she think I had forgotten when I gave her that little locket so long ago? Eh, ma femme, so 'some one'"—with a pause and an adorable flush—"gave it to you? Ah, love is not always blind!"

The duke paused suddenly before a puff-jawed Triton, who wallowed in an arid, dusty basin, and uplifted toward heaven what an indulgent observer might construe as a broken conchshell. "Love!" cried the duke. "Mon Dieu, how are the mighty fallen! I have not even the decency to conceal from myself that I love my wife! I am shameless. I had as lief proclaim it from the housetops. And a month ago—tarare, the ignorant beast I was! But then I had not passed a month in her company—eh, bien, I defy Diogenes and Timon to come through the ordeal with unscratched hearts. I love her.

"And she loves me!" His voice sank into well-nigh incredulous wonder. Then he drew a deep breath, and lifted his comely hands toward the pale Spring sky, where the west wind was shepherding a sluggish flock of clouds. "O sun, moon and stars!" cried the duke, with a tremor of speech, "I call you all to witness she loves me! She has always loved me! O kindly little universe! O little kings, tricked out with garish crowns and sceptres, you are masters of your petty kingdoms, but I—I am master of her heart! She loves me!

"I do not deserve it," he conceded, to a dilapidated faun, who, though his flute and the hands that held it had been missing for over a quarter of a century, still piped on with grim determination. "Ah, heart of gold—ah, little heart of gold, I have not merited that you should hold my likeness all these years! If I had my deserts—ch, bien, let us take such goods as the gods provide, and not question the wisdom of their dispensations. Thus may many of us escape hanging."

The duke came to an armless Cupid, who brooded, misanthropically, in a damp temple at the farther end of the avenue, and was, from circumstantial evidence, not wholly unacquainted with the tastes and habits of snails. "If—if she had not loved me—?" he queried of the unsympathetic deity; then shuddered a little. "Ah, I am afraid to think of that! If she did not—if she did not—before God, I could not live!" cried the duke, in a frightened voice.

"But she loves me!" he repeated, over and over again, as he sought the hôtel with a quick tread—"me, all unworthy as I am!

"O heart of gold!" he said, with ineffable tenderness, and paused for a little at the end of the avenue. "Ah, my dear, my dear! the long, long years I have wasted!" The wicked Duc de Puysange raised his eyes toward heaven, and spoke as simply as any village lad. "I will make recompense," said he. "Dear God

in heaven, aid me to make recompense!"

"So, madame has visitors? Eh, bien, let us, then, behold these naughty visitors, who would sever a loving husband from his wife."

From within the red salon came a murmur of speech—quiet, cordial, colorless—which showed very plainly that madame had visitors. As the Duc de Puysange reached out his hand to draw aside the portières, her voice was speaking, courteously, but without vital interest.

"—and afterward," said she,

"weather permitting--"

"Ah, Helène!" cried a voice that the duke knew almost as well, "how long am I to be held at arm's length by these petty conventionalities? Am I never to be permitted to speak

freely?"

The half-drawn portière trembled in the duke's hand. He could see very plainly, from where he stood, the inmates of the salon, though their backs were turned to him. They were his wife and the Marquis de Soyecourt—de Soyecourt, the companion of his youth, the friend of his manhood, his co-partner in many mad escapades, and the owner of a name scarcely less scandal-tainted than his own. The marquis bent eagerly toward the Duchesse de Puysange, who had risen as he spoke.

For a moment, she stood immovable as her perplexed husband; then, with a little, wearied sigh, the duchess sank back into a fauteuil. "You are at liberty to speak," she said, slowly, and with averted eyes—"what you

choose."

The portière fell; but, between the folds of the curtains, the duke still peered into the room, where de Soyecourt had drawn nearer to his wife. "There is little to say," the marquis murmured, "beyond what my eyes have surely told—that I love you."

"Ah!" the duchess cried, with a swift intaking of the breath that was

almost a sob.

"Monsieur, I think you forget that

you are speaking to the wife of your triend."

The marquis threw out his hands in a gesture that was a trifle theatrical, though the trouble that wrung his countenance was very real. He was a slight, fair man, with the face of an ecclesiastic and the eyes of an aging seraph. A dull pang shot through the duke, as he thought of the two years' difference in their ages and of his own tendency to embon point. The fellow was incredibly well preserved.

"Do you think," said the marquis, "I do not know that I act a dishonorable part? Honor, friendship!—ah, I regret them, but love is greater than

these little things!"

The duchess sighed. "For my part," she said, "I think differently. Love is, doubtless, very wonderful and beautiful, but I am sufficiently old-fashioned to hold my honor yet dearer. Even—even if I loved you, monsieur, there are certain words, sworn before the altar, that I could not forget." She looked up very firmly, as she spoke, into the flushed, hand-some face of the marquis.

"Words!" he cried, impatiently.
"An oath," she answered, sadly;

"an oath that I shall not break."

There was a great hunger in the marquis's eyes, and his hands lifted and trembled a little with a passionate longing to take her in his arms. Their glances met for a long, breathless moment, and his eyes were very tender, and hers were like resolute, gray stars, but very, very compassionate.

"I love you!" he said, simply.

"Monsieur," said the duchess, and the depths of her great contralto voice were shaken like the sobbing of a violin, and her little hands stole upward to her bosom, and clasped the tiny gold heart, as she spoke, "monsieur, ever since I first knew you, many years ago, at my father's home, I have held you as my friend. You were more kind to the girl, monsieur, than you have been to the woman. Only since your return to Paris this Spring have I feared—have I feared—this. I have tried to prevent it, for—

for your friendship was very dear to me. I have failed." With a little sob, the duchess lifted the gold heart to her lips, and her golden head bent over it. "Monsieur," she cried, in a stifled voice, "before God, if I had loved you with my whole heart-if I had loved you all these years—if the sight of your face was to me the one good thing life holds, and the mere sound of your voice set my heart beating-beating-" she paused for a little, and then rose, with a sharp breath that shook her slender body, "even then, monsieur, my answer to you would be the same, and that is-go!"

"Hélène!" he murmured, his outstretched hands groping vaguely,

blindly, toward her.

"Let us have no misunderstanding, monsieur," she protested, coldly; "you

have my answer."

The Marquis de Soyecourt had not led a clean life; his past held many transactions of which even he had the grace to be ashamed. But the great passion, that now possessed him, had purified and transfigured the man, for the moment. His face was ascetic in its reverence, as he stood with his head slightly bowed, and the wonder of her flawless beauty surging over his heart, like a flood. "I go," he said, picking his way carefully among tumbling words; then bent over her hand, which she made no effort to withdraw. "Ah, my dear!" cried the marquis, staring without shame into her shy, uplifted eyes, "I think I might have made you happy!"

His arm brushed against the arm of the duke as he left the salon. Neither was aware of the fact; the blind, sick misery of neither would have been disturbed by anything less noticeable than

an earthquake.

"'If I had loved you all these years,'" murmured the Duc de Puysange. His dull gaze wandered toward the great "Herodias" of Giorgione, that hung beside him; the strained face of the woman, the accented muscles of her arms, the purple, bellying cloak that spread behind her, the livid counfeb. 1903

tenance of the dead man staring up from the salver—all these he noted, idly. He loathed that wonderful picture until his dying day. "I will make recompense," said the duke. "Dear God in heaven, aid me to make recompense!"

He came into the room, humming an air of the Boulevards; the crimson hangings swirled about him, and the Louis Quinze furniture swayed in many airy, thin-legged minuets. He sank into a chair before the great mirror, supported by frail love-gods, who contended for its possession. He viewed his pale reflection therein, and laughed, lightly. "Pardon, ma mie," he said; "but my castles in the air are tumbling very noisily about my ears. It is difficult to think clearly amid the crashing of the battlements."

"I do not understand." The duchess had lifted an incurious face toward him, as he entered the salon. She was all in gray, and a broad, low hat of gray felt spread about the hair that had snared the sunlight in its tendrils. Over its brim, a great white owl, lying with outstretched wings, flashed sardonic glances toward the duke.

"My life," laughed the Duc de Puysange, "I assure you, I am quite incorrigible. I have just committed another dishonorable action; peccavi!" He smote himself upon the breast, and sighed portentously. "I accuse

myself of eavesdropping."

"You mean—?" She had risen to

her teet.

"Ah, I am punished," the duke reassured her; then laughed, with discreetly tempered bitterness. "Figure to yourself, ma mie: I had planned a life for us two, during which our new friendship was to stretch unimpaired to the very door of the tomb. Eh, bien, man proposes! De Soyecourt is of a jealous disposition; and here I sit, amid my fallen air-castles, like Marius in the ruins of Carthage."

"De Soyecourt?" she echoed, dully. "Ah, my poor child!" said the duke, and, rising, took her hand in a paternal fashion, "did you think that, at this

late day, the state of matrimony was still an incurable one? We progress, ma mie. You shall have grounds for a separation—oh, sufficient, unimpeachable grounds, that even the society journals will not question. You shall have your choice of desertion, infidelity, cruelty in the presence of witnesses—oh, I shall prove a veritable Bluebeard!" He laughed, not unkindly, at her bewilderment.

"You heard—all?" she queried, with

wide eyes.

"I have already confessed," the duke reminded her. "And, ma foi, speaking as an unprejudiced observer, I should say the man really loves you. So be it! You shall have your separation; you shall marry him. Behold a fact accomplished!" The duke snapped his fingers airily, and made a pirouette; then, with mocking emphasis, he hummed a certain march of Mendelssohn's.

There was a little pause. She was—oh, God, how beautiful she was!

"You—you really wish to give me my freedom?" she asked, in wonder, and drew near to him.

The Duc de Puysange seated himself, with a smile, and admirable discretion. "Mon Dieu!" he protested, "who am I, to keep true lovers apart? As the first proof of our new-sworn friendship, I now offer you any form of abuse or maltreatment you may select."

Very timidly, she drew yet nearer to him. Afterward, with a little sigh of happiness, her warm arms clasped about his neck. "Mountebank!" she murmured, and her voice was a caress to the ear, "do you, then, love me very much?"

"I?" The duke raised his eyebrows. Yet—yet, surely, there was no great harm in drawing his cheek a trifle closer to hers?

"You love me!" she insisted,

softly.

"It pains me to the heart," the duke apologized—oh, God, what strange tricks a man's voice may play him! Oh, God, how long a man's heart may stand quite still, and he yet live!—"it

pains me to the heart to be guilty of this rudeness to a lady; but, after all, honesty is a proverbially recommended virtue; I must admit I do not."

"Ah, Gaston, will you not confess?" Her cheeks were, undeniably, much warmer and much softer than those of

other women.

"Eh, ma mie," cried the duke, warningly, "do not be unduly elated by de Soyecourt's avowal! You are a very charming, but—'de gustibus——'"

"Gaston!" she murmured.

"Ah, dear God!" The duke cast her from him, roughly, and paced the room with quick, unequal strides. "Yes, yes, yes!" he cried. "I love you with every nerve and fiber of my body—with every pure thought and aspiration of my soul! I love you ah, the weak, pitiful words that cannot grapple with love's majesty! ah, the weak, pitiful folly that cannot be silent! Oh, heart of gold! oh, heart of gold, that I have not merited!" The brave turmoil of his soul died, as he faced her, into a sudden, sick, illimitable calm. "Hélène," said he, gently, "I had not meant to speak thus. But I love you. I love you sufficiently to resign you to the man your heart has chosen. I- Pardon me," and he swept a white hand over his brow, with a little, choking laugh, "but I find this new passion somewhat boisterous. I —it stifles one unused to it."

She faced him, inscrutably; but her eyes were deep wells of gladness. "Monsieur," she said, "yours is a noble love. I will not trifle with it.

I—I accept your offer."

"Ma mie, you act with your usual

wisdom," said the duke.

"On one condition—"she continued.
"Unconditionally," he suggested,
with an insinuating smile.

"—that you resume your position

as eavesdropper."

The duke obeyed her pointing finger, in a dull fashion. When he had reached the portières, he looked back, wearily, into the salon. She had seated herself in the fauteuil, where the Marquis de Soyecourt had bent over her, and she had kissed the little gold locket.

Her back was turned to him; but their eyes met in the great mirror, supported by frail love-gods, who contended for its possession.

"Comedy for comedy," she murmured. Sea-cold!—who had called her

eyes sea-cold?

"I—I do not understand," he said, in a frightened whisper; then sprang toward her, gasping. "The locket—the locket—?" cried the Duc de Puysange, and the joy of heaven and the despair of hell tore at his voice.

"Open it!" she answered, and her speech, too, was breathless.

The Duc de Puysange ground the trinket under his heel. The long, thin chain clashed and caught about his foot; but the face of his youth smiled back at him from the broken fragment held in his quivering hands. "Oh, heart of gold! oh, heart of gold!" he sobbed, and his eyes turned blindly toward the great, glad, glorious eyes of his wife; "I am not worthy!"



A VALENTINE TO ROSE

MY valentine is Rose, and she
Is her own happy simile;
By any other name a rose
Were not more sweet, and Cupid knows
This Rose is sweet enough for me.

Her lips with rose-leaves well agree—Crimson and curled; and I can see
That every day more lovely grows
My valentine.

Sweetheart, when Cupid comes, and he Asks but a rose's kiss for fee,
Grant him the balm for all his woes;
Give him your heart before he goes,
And bid him bring it back to be
My valentine.

FELIX CARMEN.



NO RESPONSE

1 DON'T believe that the spirits will come to-night," said one impatient waiter for the séance to begin.

"I don't think they will," said another; "they don't seem to care a rap for this medium."



FIRST DIVINITY STUDENT—What is the subject for discussion at the Debating Society to-night?

SECOND DITTO—The Influence of Creased Trousers on the Decadence of Prayer.

THE DEAREST GIFT

WHEN all the dancing feet are still,
The rose's bloom is shed and sped,
When she has waltzed her happy fill
With Will and Jack and Ted and Fred,
Tired of the whirl and jollity,
Her lovely eyes weighed down with sleep,
Then, at the last, she comes to me,
And she is all my own—to keep!

I find her gloves and tie her wrap,
We say our good nights left and right;
Now I'm the to-be-envied chap!
Ah, now, indeed, it is good night!
Of lovers' joy let wooers prate;
What could a man ask more, in life,
Than this best, dearest gift of fate—
To have a sweetheart for a wife?

MADELINE BRIDGES.



NOT TO BE BAFFLED

MRS. BANGS—So that pretty widow is really married so soon again, eh?

MRS. BANGS—But her late husband's will expressly stipulated that, if she took a second husband, her legacy was to revert to his most distant relative

OLD BANGS—That's where she was foxy. She hunted up the relative, and married him.



HIS DISTANT MANNER

SHE—How far away were you from the automobile when it dashed by? HE—About as far as I am from you. "Oh, then you were perfectly safe."



HE—Aren't you going to Florida this year?

SHE—No, dear; why, it's twice as expensive to live in New York.

THE COURTING OF DRUSILLA WEST

By Emma Wolf

HERE are records, unwritten, but authentic, to prove that she was born masterful. Even as an infant, she won through no surrender. When her mother decreed pap, and Drusilla craved soupwhich happened nine times out of ten—soup it had to be, or nothing. When her mother said, "up," and Drusilla said, "down," it was choosing between her own common sense and her baby's fearfully suspended breath -an easy enigma to most women. Iealous mothers called Drusilla stubborn; her own mother said she was firm. "I do so admire tenacity of will." declared little Mrs. West, valiantly.

The truth of the matter was that Drusilla was the only child of a widow of the yielding, entreating sort, who, bereft of her natural masculine leading-strings, gave in, per custom, to the bullying of her masterful daughter. Had Drusilla been a weaker child, she might have been spoiled; but, being strong, she was strengthened—along the line of her weaknesses.

Now, Drusilla's strength lay in her weaknesses, and the greatest of these was her love of ruling. The third afternoon after her first day at school. she rallied the little children of her neighborhood upon her door-stepwhether they would or not-and taught them combinations of the first five digits, in such a manner that it was said those children were mathematicians made from this day forth. Every afternoon, the play-school was convened under her quiet, "Come," or the more strenuous suasion of the pull of her hand. There were no 69

stragglers—there were many intruders, and all were constrained to follow her in fear and fascination. She had a wonderful way with her of imparting anything she chose to impart, but when she arrived at the gate of history, her individuality was born. all else, matter-of-fact to the verge of positivism, in this, her imagination blazed clear yet passionate. At the age of nine, she conceived the method of enacting historical scenes and characters for the enlightenment and delight of her small student body, and her delineations met with such success that, when dreamy Bob Dexter. aged eleven, was asked who wrote the Declaration of Independence, he promptly answered, "Drusilla West." The amusement attendant upon this response was destined to follow Drusilla down many years of her womanhood.

From all of which, it follows, consistently, that, when this only child of the widow of an army officer reached years of maturity and college honors, we find her filling the position of teacher of history in a select girls' school of her native city. She had signed her declaration of independence, and was earning a generous salary.

She wore her hair in a tight, hard, yellow-brown knot, on the middle of her head, and from this fastness no hair was ever known to escape to brow, temple or nape. She affected, or, rather, adopted, high linen collars, the effect of which was to turn her white neck to a mocking golden. Long before short skirts were in vogue, Drusilla West's skirts cleared the ground by two good inches, and un-

blushingly revealed her flat-heeled shoes in all their length, breadth and thickness. Thus she strode to and from school, lecture-room, theatre or library. The frivolous, the flippant, the faddish knew her not, nor she them. Man she eschewed altogether, except in cases of intellectual or mercantile expediency. Matrimony was a necessary evil for others; herself it did not concern. She was an excellent, a brilliant teacher, and so she came into her twenty-seventh year.

In that year of grace, on a bright afternoon in September, a short, decisive ring of the door-bell started the quiet of Mrs. West's little house. Mrs. West, who was sewing near the window, rose to answer it, but Drusilla said, "Sit still," and Mrs. West sat. Drusilla put her mark in her book, and went to open the door.

A burly, bearded, oldish man, in a long overcoat of ancient cut, stood in the doorway.

"Does Mrs. Amanda West live here?" he asked in a pleasant, twanging voice.

"She does," said Drusilla, holding the door-knob, tentatively; "what is your business?"

"Who are you?" asked the stranger in turn, with an amused smile.

. Miss West's toplofty nose pointed at him in haughty reticence. Her eyes clinched him with a cool, steady beam. "Kindly state your business," she remarked.

"Well, now," drawled the man, in leisurely good humor, "I'm ashamed to confess I'm out of business, and cards. But, if you're the maid, you can tell Mrs. West I'm Jonathan West, her brother-in-law from South Africa."

"Oh!" said Drusilla, with a gleam of surprise and apology, and she opened the door wider. "Come in. I am Drusilla West, her daughter."

"And my niece. Howd'y, Drusie?" He stepped over the threshold, and held out a friendly hand, his keen eyes betraying a puzzled smile in their scrutiny of her person. "I would kiss you, my dear, but perhaps I'd better ask first."

Drusilla's really fine eyebrows went up in faint dismissal of the suggestion. She turned and opened the sitting-room door. "Mother," she announced, "here is Mr. Jonathan West, my father's brother."

Mrs. West, who was of a naturally affectionate temperament, which had once been demonstrative, but had long since run to seed, came forward with a little, fluttering cry and little fluttering hands outheld, and Jonathan bent his head, and kissed her warmly. At which, Mrs. West began to cry.

"There, there," said Jonathan, patting her hand encouragingly, but still keeping his bright eyes upon his strictly perpendicular young niece. "Let me see," he calculated, "you must be of age."

"I am twenty-six," replied Drusilla, with pleasant distinctness.

"Still young enough to tell the truth, eh? Next year, you'll begin to count backward."

"Oh, no," she assured him, lightly.

"Or you'll get married."

"Jonathan, take off your over-coat," said Mrs. West, with precipitate hospitality.

But, at dinner, he returned to the

charge.

"How many beaux have you, Drusilla?" he asked, with undue gravity. Mrs. West fluttered an apologetic smile toward her daughter, but she was only half-frightened, warmed, as she was, by his brave presence and loquacity.

"I dislike the word," commented

Drusilla.

"Lovers, then," corrected Jonathan, good-naturedly.

"I have never counted them," placidly smiled Drusilla.

"What! so many?"

"None at all." The faint smile of her mouth was as close and tight as the small knot at the back of her head.

"How is that?"

"I cannot conceive of what use they would be to me."

"Use—by Jove, use! Why, they're there to cut your eye-teeth on—before tackling the nut of matrimony."

"Oh, matrimony!"

"Well?"

"Exactly."

"I said, matrimony."

"And I said, matrimony."

"It sounded like martyr-mony. What's wrong about the institution?"

- "Nothing. It's an excellent institution. But entering it is optional, is it not? Personally, it doesn't interest
- "Did you ever have a great illness in childhood?"

"No," laughed Drusilla. "Why?"

"I thought it might have left a clot on the brain. You'll marry, all right enough."

"Oh, no, I won't." "Oh, yes, you will."

"My dear Mr. West, I have said I will not."

"And that settles it?"

"Absolutely."
"By Jove!" said Jonathan, and stared her over and through. He kept his temper that first time, but never after. It broke again and again against the rock of Drusilla's calm finality, in the many discussions he forced upon her.

"Don't you think you had better let me alone?" she suggested several times, when he retired, red and dis-

comfited from his butting.

"I will never let you alone," he

growled, mentally foaming.

He never could abandon the subject, and he never approached it tranquilly. "Some day, I'll pull the pins out of your soul," he threatened

Drusilla assured him her soul was

an open sheet.

"Out of your hair then," he snarled. "It's the same thing. What do you want to screw it up like that for? I vow you pull your eyebrows back with it."

"I like it that way," laughed Drusilla.

''It's ridiculous.''

"To you, perhaps; not to me."

"Your self-sufficiency is unwomanly."
"To your conventional idea."

"A woman's a woman, and she's made for a man."

"That is the rule. It doesn't con-

cern me."

"What does concern you, vitally, utterly—if a simple man may ask?"

"The Renaissance. I am making

a study of it, you know."

"No, I don't know; and, what's more, I don't care. Study your own renaissance. It will come. You're only medieval now. You'll get back to the natural order, in spite of yourself."

"We've threshed that out thoroughly, haven't we? And we have agreed to differ. Let us have sense enough to know when we have finished.'

"But I haven't finished. And my last word won't be said till the day you marry."

"You have a long life before you, I'm

glad to say."

"We'll see. I'll win out yet. You'll

be married before you think."

"It would have to be before I I am not commonly thoughtthink. less."

"Damnation!" said Jonathan, at the end of his tether. Drusilla's supe-

riority forgave him.

But he quieted down from the day he was taken ill. Even Drusilla was surprised over his entire forgetfulness of the cause of their war, with the onslaught of this new enemy. They became better friends in those few weeks than she had ever thought they could be. Only once did he revert to their old contention, and that was gently done.

"There's a woman's heart under those hands, anyway, Drusie," he said, the first time she fluffed the

pillows for his hot head.

"Of course, you poor, sick man!"

said Drusilla, cheerily.

"I mean for a well man, child," he explained. And Drusilla forbore to answer.

But he was unaccountable in the sudden paroxysms of silent laughter he developed later, whenever she entered his room. In fact, it is regrettable to relate that, in the midst of a most violent fit of this strange merriment, he sputtered explosively, "Oh, Drusilla, forgive me!" and, still laughing helplessly, he turned on his side, and died.

Three days later, when Mr. Foxham, of the law firm of Foxham, Ford & Forham, came out to the little house, and, in the presence of one of his own clerks and Mrs. West's maid, read to mother and daughter Jonathan West's last will and testament, Drusilla understood that dying cachinnation.

For, true to his threat and strong in his desire, he had devised to his niece, Drusilla West, all his property, real and personal, on the sole condition of her marrying within three months after the date of his death. In the event of her refusing to comply with the condition, the property was to devolve to certain orphan asylums, share and share alike.

"I take pleasure in advising you that the value of Mr. West's estate approximates two hundred and ten thousand dollars," said Mr. Foxham, rising and extending a hand to the ladies, "mostly in United States bonds, and water steels of this city."

and water stock of this city."

Then, as the stupefaction on Mrs. West's face and the superciliousness of Drusilla's were, obviously, too intense for words, and put them all in a rather embarrassing position, Mr. Foxham and his clerk gathered up their papers, and took courteous leave.

Drusilla stood as erect as a flagpole by the centre-table, her hand upon a

book.

Mrs. West's gaze wavered over her. "Oh, Drusilla!" she blurted,

hysterically.

"There is nothing to be said," checked Drusilla, forbiddingly. Her mouth was set in an expression so tense a stranger might have thought it locked back tears.

"But—Drusilla—" protested the little woman, in a cry of outrage.

"I object—to being made—the butt of a vulgar joke," pronounced the girl steadily, with stiffened jaw. "But — Drusie — darling!" argued Mrs. West, incoherently, forgetting fortifications in her mental confusion.

"There—is—nothing—to be said," clicked Drusilla, mechanically. But her voice did not break, and she went from the room with head up, although Mrs. West had succumbed and was audibly weeping.

But there was much to be considered, and she had three months in which to

consider it.

At the end of the first two weeks, Drusilla still appeared calm-eyed, levelheaded, as though nothing unusual had occurred. And Mrs. West looked on with bated breath. At the end of the fourth week, the lines, which were forming at either side of Drusilla's mouth, had settled into periods. Mrs. West awaited the blow.

"I shall offer to compromise," said

Drusilla, hardily.

"How?" questioned Mrs. West,

meekly.

"I shall take half. The rest may go to the orphans, providing I am left free."

But her lawyers assured her there could be no compromise—it would have to be all in all, or none at all.

Drusilla went home, and seemed to enter into a state of mental catalepsy.

Toward the end of the second month, the periods at either side of her mouth had run into grooves. Thought had besieged Drusilla. She emerged from the conflict pale, thin and spent, with a stern light of worriment in her wide gaze. Her mother saw, but turned from her with a species of determination in her hitherto appealing regard, as though she had breathed irrevocably, "I shall never forgive her."

"She will never forgive me," construed Drusilla, miserably, resenting the situation; and that night, in the privacy of her own room, Drusilla wept—not weakly, not exhaustively, but passionately, rebelliously—ten short, big, hot tears. But she mopped them up precipitately and, figuratively, wrung herself dry.

"Of course, there is her side," she

told herself, logically. "We are poor. She has had to manage. We're screwed down to necessities. Our occasional luxuries are efforts. She would be happy in a beautiful home. She likes beautiful clothes, and giving, and ease; and—she is growing old." Drusilla felt a sudden dizziness of perception, as though she had fallen asleep on an empty stomach, been roughly wakened, and ordered to march.

"But I won't be bullied by circumstance," she gallantly resisted. "I won't do what I've always sworn not to do. I have no inclination that way. I hate it. I won't be bound to any one's peculiarities. I like to be alone. I'm content as I am. My work is my only—affinity. I love it. I don't want anything. Of course, one could travel—and—"

Mystically, serenely, in classic simplicity, the Parthenon rose before her mental vision, and faded, only to be followed by scene after scene, rich in historic suggestion, as though a biograph had been sprung upon her. She sat clutching her fingers, her eyes closed. Gradually, the expression of exalted absorption upon her face gave way to placid joy. Drusilla was beginning to spend her money.

Mrs. West, watching her now, could make nothing of her. Noting her calculating, level brows and abstracted gaze, poor Mrs. West could only think bitterly, "The king was in his counting-house, counting out his money," while "The king's mother" was, inch by inch, succumbing to nervous prostration

"I do not think I shall get up this morning," she said, with a sort of sob, on the Friday of the tenth week; "I'm tired."

Something knocked sharply at Drusilla's conscience. She had received official summons.

That night, after leaving her mother, she went into retirement, and proceeded to wind up her affairs. She discovered, to her surprise, that they were in a remarkable state of order.

The next morning, she appeared be-

fore her mother, bright and assertive, in the rôle of nurse, and quietly made her comfortable—her mother reserving to herself the right of arranging her own hair. When all was daintily neat, Drusilla sat down before her.

"I have, at last, arrived at a conclusion," she said, cheerily—Mrs. West did not ask upon what subject—"I have decided that the thing may be arranged with very little discomfort and a nominal monetary sacrifice. It will be quite unnecessary to refuse the inheritance."

Mrs. West murmured something inarticulate. Two bright spots had

sprung to her cheeks.

"I have decided that one must pay, to extricate one's self from any difficulty—proportionately to the difficulty, of course. I do not wish to marry. But, in order to come into the money, I must. Therefore, I shall. I shall find some worthy, impecunious young man, offer him fifty thousand dollars on the day he undergoes the marriage ceremony with me, on the proviso that it be considered a mere legal procedure, entailing no obligations on either side, and that, at the end of the necessary interim, I shall be allowed to divorce myself."

Mrs. West was past speaking.

"Is it clear?" asked her daughter,

brightly.

"Ye-es," gasped the mother, and then she began to laugh, and continued to do so weakly till forced to dry her eyes. "You are so very clever, Drusilla!" she said, feebly. "And who—who might the—the worthy, impecunious man be?"

"I am not sure, as yet. But I shall have decided by this afternoon."

"Oh," said her mother, "yes. Drusilla, do you know, I feel quite well. I think I shall get up." In her mind's eye, she was already drawing up in review the several men who could claim acquaintance—but nothing further—with her daughter, and the end of her cogitations was confusion and vexation of spirit. Unless Drusilla was leading a double life—and that was impossible—there was no one in her

experience whom her mother considered approachable with such an

extraordinary proposition.

The day being Saturday and a half-holiday for Drusilla, she came into her mother's room about two o'clock in the afternoon, armored in her outdoor costume. This consisted of a dark gray homespun of the tailor order, hung high and clear of the ground as to skirt, closely and directly buttoned as to jacket, above the flat reticence of which appeared the inevitable tall linen collar and small, black string tie. Her hat was black, round and unnoticeable. As she stood before her mother, she drew on a pair of heavy, gentlemanly, dark tan gloves.

"I am going down-town," she announced, with her usual frankness as to her goings-out and comings-in. "I am going to make the business proposition, of which I spoke, to Robert

Dexter, your friend's son."

"But—but, Drusilla, do you know

him well enough for that?"

"I know him little enough for that. Though his conceit be colossal, he could never conceive that I have chosen him from other than a practical motive. I know all about him from my mother, and, no doubt, he knows all there is to be known of me from his. I know him to be supporting his mother and younger brother in rather extravagant style—the extravagance being a feature of his mother's —on a salary as literary critic of a newspaper. I have heard he has talent, and the desire-without the means—of devoting his entire time to his more original writings. He looks honorable and sensible. I knew him as a small boy, when I was a smaller girl, and, for some reason unknown to myself, he has always seen fit to maintain a bowing acquaintance with me. We have often exchanged a word or two.''

"Oh!" commented Mrs. West,

vaguely.

"I prefer to lay the question before him, in person, in order to avoid misunderstanding. I think that is all. Good-bye." And she fared forth on her quest of a modern knight.

They told her, in the office of the newspaper, that Mr. Dexter was generally in at that hour, and the lift took her to the fourth floor, where his prince to the respect to the fourth floor.

vate den was situated.

In reply to her imperious knock, a soft, drawling voice said, "Come," and Drusilla entered a stuffy little room, filled with a desk which was almost extinguished under loose papers and books. In the foreground of this confusion sat a slender young man, who failed to raise his eyes, to say nothing of himself, as his visitor came forward. He had recognized the feminine through the determined tread, and awaited the manuscript.

He waited.

"Yes?" he questioned, gently, changing his pencil for a sharper one, and continuing his proof-reading.

"Mr. Dexter?"

"Yes?"

"Is it a physical impossibility for you to raise your eyes any higher than the desk-line?"

"Why, no," he laughed, looking up at the voice of command. The next instant, he was on his feet. "I rise to the occasion," he said, heartily extending a hand. Sweeping the chair beside his clear of printed matter, he begged her to be seated.

"I hope you will pardon my rudeness," he essayed, his pleasant hazel eyes fixed respectfully upon her, "but it is a habit I wear here—in self-de-

fense.''

"I understand," she said, showing an edge of white teeth for a brief flash; and Dexter thought she might be comfortable to talk with. "I shall not presume by detaining you any longer than necessary," she proceeded. "But I must ask you to give me your undivided attention for a few minutes." She spoke in the rostrum manner which had become inseparable from her, and Dexter, hearing her and regarding her, seemed to see, rising upon the wall behind her, the charts and blackboards of his distant and unregretted schooldays. He felt himself

mentally grinning when she added, with another suggestion of the white teeth, "I have no manuscript to submit for your kind consideration.'

"I'm disappointed," he said, won-

"Thank you. I have come on a strictly business affair. It goes without saying that you will regard this interview as inviolately confidential."
"As you desire," he returned,

gravely, quite in the dark.

"Then I shall lay the facts of the case before you without preamble. My uncle, Jonathan West, something over two months ago, leaving me his sole heir to about two hundred and ten thousand dollars, on the proviso that I marry within three months from the date of his death. If I fail to comply with the condition, the money goes to charity. I do not desire to marry, neither do I wish to lose the bequest. I have conceived a plan whereby I can evade both trials. I have communicated with my lawyers, and they have found they can arrange to let me have fifty thousand dollars out of the estate, the day after my marriage. This I propose to give the man I have chosen to help me out of this dilemma, on the condition that it be understood that no further obligations are contracted for on either side, and that I shall institute divorce proceedings as soon as legally able. I have thought of you; because I considered you worthy the opportunity of gaining so considerable an amount for so brief an act, because you have the reputation and bearing of a gentleman, and because our acquaintance is as impersonal as the proposition. I would ask you to consider it."

Mr. Dexter blushed. He also raised his brows a trifle above his bewildered smile, scrutinizing her cool countenance more closely, to make sure that she was quite serious, and then he cleared his throat.

"This—this is so sudden, know," he murmured; but, fearing she might think the remark flippant, he added, hurriedly, "I mean—"

"Certainly," she innocently reassured him; "I quite appreciate the novelty and abruptness of the proposition, but it is the only way out. have just arrived at this possible solution, and there is no time to lose. Will you consider it?"

"Why—it certainly sounds interesting. I think-yes-I think I shall look it over before—so to speak—

reviewing it."

"Thank you." She arose, and he stood, awaiting further orders. "I shall leave you a blank I have prepared, to be filled out, affirmatively or negatively, as you decide, which I wish you would send me at your I shall also earliest convenience. leave with you what we may call my promissory note, as earnest of prompt payment for services rendered." She extracted the papers from her purse, and placed them on the desk. "I think that is all."

"Pardon me; one question," he said, earnestly. "Suppose the act be consummated, would not it—the money—have been obtained under false pretenses?"

She raised her head above the insinuation. "I think not-according to the letter of the law. Besides, the pretense is quite between the parties concerned."

"Yes," he returned, and looked down at the book, the pages of which he was rasping with his fingers. Presently, he glanced up. "And may ask—have you considered upon what grounds you will seek the divorce?

"Upon the grounds of undue influence having been brought bear.''

At this, Mr. Dexter threw back his head, and laughed. It was such a frank, ingenuous laugh that even Drusilla's restricted sense of humor responded, and she, too, smiled.

"It is all so neat," he explained, glancing involuntarily at her hair, whether spiritually or materially considered. However, I thank you for the confidence and the im-

plied-----'

"I believe neither my confidence nor my discretion has been misplaced. You understand, the proceeding will be quite automatic and impersonal. Thank you for your courtesy, and pray let me hear from you soon. I shall not keep you any longer; good afternoon!"

She inclined her head, and Dexter

bowed her out.

Two days later, the blank she had prepared was returned her by post, thus completed:

Mr. Robert Dexter accepts Miss Drusilla West's proposition in all its terms, and holds himself in readiness to fulfil further contingencies.

In prompt reply to this response, he received the following note:

WEDNESDAY.

DEAR MR. DEXTER:

I am in receipt of your acceptance. If quite convenient to you, will you be at my house Saturday, at two in the afternoon? The ceremony will be as brief as possible, with no witnesses save my mother and Mr. Foxham, the lawyer. There will be no announcements, and I shall ask those present to keep the matter secret. I would ask you—for the sake of appearances—to remain a few minutes after the others have left.

Yours truly,
DRUSILLA WEST.

To which, Robert, replying, wrote:

THURSDAY.

DEAR MISS WEST:

Count on me for Saturday at two o'clock sharp. I shall procure the license as quietly as possible, and in all else believe me,

Yours faithfully, ROBERT DEXTER.

Such were the love letters of Robert Dexter and Drusilla West.

Exactly at two o'clock of Saturday afternoon, Drusilla answered Robert's ringing of the front-door bell.

"Am I too late?" he asked, taken unaware by this unexpected appear-

ance of the bride.

"You are just on time," she answered, with agreeable tranquillity. "Dr. Graves, my pastor, Mr. Foxham and my mother are already in the sitting-room."

He put down his hat and gloves, and the bride and groom entered, amid

an impressive silence.

The bride was becomingly attired in a simple gown of dark-blue cloth, relieved at the throat by a high, white, linen collar. She was unattended, advancing before the presiding clergyman by the side of the man of her choice. The ceremony was brief and to the point; according to Miss West's expressed desire, there was no kissing. However, wine was passed to relieve the awkwardness, and after many expressions of congratulation to the young couple and the happy mother, the pastor and the lawyer withdrew.

Mrs. West, who accompanied them to the door, decided, with some nervousness, that she would run upstairs before returning to the sitting-

room. Mr

Mr. Dexter stood awaiting the pleasure of his wife. Both had borne the ordeal well, although, when Drusilla turned to him, and said, lightly, "Just a few minutes longer, Mr. Dexter—until they have turned the corner," an observer might have detected indescribable twitchings under the shadow of his mustache.

"Shall I watch?" he asked, gravely, making a move toward the window.

"Oh, no. It can't take them more than two minutes. I know this is your office hour."

"Schedule time, yes. But I very

often play hookey.'

"Indeed? I have been teaching four years, and I have never been absent a minute during my hours in all that time."

"Really? How very good — and healthy—of you! But didn't you ever long to cut and—play hookey?"

"Never. My work and I are one, you know. I chose Saturday for this

event on that account."

"And—you will return to school Monday?"

"Assuredly. Why not?"

"Why not?—as you say. I think the gentlemen must be well out of the way now, and I shall do as much for you. Present my adieux to your mother, will you? And—good afternoon."

He held out a courteous hand, and

she put hers in it.

"You will hear from me in the morning," she said, distinctly, as he opened the door, "that is—Monday morning. Thank you."

"Don't mention it," he returned,

graciously, and turned away.

In the evening, Drusilla fulfilled her part of that portion of the contract, by sending him a draft for fifty thousand dollars on the Bank of

Deposit.

Monday afternoon, she betook herself, by appointment, to her lawyer's office, and, although she was closeted with him for several hours, a sense of ease and well-being pervaded her after the exhausting séance, and she reached home in as near a state of mental and physical beatitude as her limitations allowed.

"Everything is in such simple and perfect order," she told her mother, "that the probating of the will can be arranged without any publicity—at present—of Saturday's affair, and with no trouble to ourselves. Mr. Foxham is prepared to advance us any reasonable sum we desire. Our income—"

"Your income!"

"Our income will be generous, and there will be no hitch in the proceedings. To-morrow, after school——"

"After school! Drusilla, do you mean to say you will not resign your

position?"

"I have no thought of such an intention. I should be miserable without my work—although I may take a leave of absence at the end of the term, in order to travel. Will you go with me?"

"What a question! Still, I confess—I had thought—other thoughts."

"A new home, for instance? That shall be yours, of course. Remember, if I don't guess, you are to speak."

"Thank you, dear. And—oh, Drusilla, there is a letter for you in your

room!"

Drusilla went off to find her letter. She looked down at the manly handwriting of the address, while withdrawing her hat-pins, frowning over the intrusion of a distasteful memory. She tore open the envelope, and found a note, enclosing what seemed to be a printed slip. Without glancing at this latter, her eyes quickly devoured the written, explanatory communication.

It began without salutation:

For reasons best known to the writer, I am returning you the cheque herewith, as you perceive, with many thanks for your generous intentions. When you stop to consider, you will understand how utterly impossible it would be to accept it. Regard this as final, and remember I was heartily glad to help you out of your difficulty, with no inconvenience whatsoever to myself. Pray believe me always,

Your friend, Robert Dexter.

For a moment, Drusilla felt as though she had received a stinging blow between the eyes. When she recovered, a fierce implacability looked from her face, and seemed to possess all her faculties. Mechanically, she set herself to living through the night and her duties of the next day, but, at the one-o'clock intermission, she found she could subdue herself no longer, and, for the first time in the course of her professional life, excused herself for the day.

In this perturbed state, she reached Dexter's office; but, as she raised her hand to rap, sternness settled like a defensive cloak upon her, and she entered his presence, apparently mistress of herself.

She ignored his invitation to be seated.

"I have received your communication, together with the returned cheque," she announced, facing him squarely.

He bowed, curiously conscious that

she was appallingly pale.

"I regard your action as an insult, sir," she continued.

"I sincerely trust not. It was done in perfect deference to you, Miss—Dru—er——"

"The name is of no consequence. You have broken the terms of a contract—of a trust."

"My intention was honorable—to

both of us. I acted solely from motives of chivalry."

"I did not need your chivalry.

was a matter of business."

"I choose rather to regard it as a

matter of sentiment."

"There could be no sentiment attached to it. It was a transaction in which fifty thousand dollars changed hands."

"Your charitable impulses are admirable, but I really do not belong to

the worthy poor, you know."

"It was sent you in return for a valuable service rendered—according

to written contract."

"The service was nominal. I considered I had merely relieved a lady in distress-gentlemen do not commonly accept pay for such deeds. The experience was delightful."

"Sir!"

"Madame?"

His gentle, deferential interrogation was like a soft hand upon her indignation. She gasped, as if to fling it off.

"How dare you!" she cried, obscurely.

"I beg——"

"You have treated a serious affair with levity. You have behaved rudely —detestably. You are dishonorable, sir."

"That is a strong word for an inno-

cent deed, Miss-West."

"It was not innocent; it was premeditated—calculated. You have insulted my intelligence and my-my womanhood, Mr. Dexter."

"I had no idea you would regard I considered only myself—I thought you would understand—and smile. Forgive me."

"You will take back the cheque?"

She held it toward him.

"Pardon me—that is impossible."

He stood, courteous, inexorable, before her, his hand resting lightly on the desk. With a sudden forward movement, she thrust the paper between his fingers.

He deliberately raised it and tore it in two. The fragments fluttered to the floor as he raised his quiet, obdur-

ate eyes to hers.

"I-I can continue to send you cheques," she asseverated, in unrecognizable indistinctness.

"I can continue to destroy them."

She looked at him, hotly. "Youyou-" She stamped her foot against her own weakness, and turned away in terror, the great tears beyond control. She hid her face in her hands, in a passion of defeat and a stunning sense of ineffectiveness. She set her teeth against his power-she would stop this hateful crying and-

An arm passed behind her, close to her neck, sent a shock of madness through her. She turned roughly and -the gods know why-caught her hair, her celibatic hair, in the buttons on his coat sleeve. Drusilla had

slipped her moorings.

What do you mean?" she blazed, angrily, vainly endeavoring to extricate herself, drawing as far from him as space would allow, and almost crushing through the window in her extremity.

"I am so sorry," he said, contritely, as though he had overstepped his marital rights, his fingers busy with the long, burnished strands entangled about his sleeve-buttons. "I wanted to open the window—the room seemed close—and you turned so suddenly. Oh, I'm afraid I am hurting you."

"Let go—please." She tore herself from him, and, with the movement, a heavy strand of hair fell for-

ward, down to her waist.

He moved quickly back, while, with shaken, hurried fingers, she gathered

up her fallen dignity.

"Oh, don't!" he exclaimed, inadvertently, as she made to draw it sharply into place, but, confused by her glance of withering contempt, "it is so becoming—it is like—revelation," he murmured, forgetful of who was who, lost in the astounding transformation.

Drusilla completed her resurrection, her face turning from burning red to the same appalling pallor it had worn when she entered.

"You will find the money deposited in the bank, in your name," she said, icily, and, without further glance, she strode from the room.

She was accompanied by an insufferable obsession, by a persistent ringing in her ears; it whirled down in the elevator with her, danced to the tramp of her footsteps, kept time to the whirr of the trolley, served her impishly at table, regulated her mastication, sang over the sense of her book. "It is so becoming—it is like—revelation—" the words spoken slowly, breathlessly, in the gently masculine timbre of the sex to its opposite.

She pushed her book aside at last, and rose abruptly. "I think I shall go to bed," she said; "my head is aching." The femininity of the excuse was so novel, Mrs. West looked

up, startled.

"My dear, what has happened?"

she exclaimed, starting up.

"Happened!" echoed Drusilla, congealing, "what could have happened? It may be—biliousness. Please don't bother. I'll be all right in the morning, mother. Good night."

Demonlike, it walked up-stairs with her, and, entering the privacy of her room, enfolded her completely.

"A man has no right to employ that tone," defied poor, unsophisticated Drusilla, sinking into a chair and resting her tired head upon the cushion. Then, as if in rebuke of her weakness, she sat up, hastily. Her eyes caught her reflection in the mirror; she turned away with an impatient sound, and began to undress.

She withdrew the pins from her hair, and shook it down, preparatory to brushing it for the night. It was her habit to braid it in a tight cue, well back from her ears, taut and high from the nape. To-night, her fingers bungled strangely over the task.

"Pshaw!" she thought, impatiently, "it is all snarled;" and she divided it in two. With drooped eyes, she proceeded to braid it in two loose, heavy plaits, which fell caressingly about either side of her face. She raised her eyes, furtively, as the second gold-brown mesh fell from her hands. Truly, it was like—revelation. Long

time, she stood and gazed, acquiring knowledge. Long time, she was drawing away, seeking her pillow. But not to sleep. Toward two in the morning, she arose stealthily, and turned on the light. The hair was unbraided, tossed and brushed to the crown of her head; a pull here, a pin there, and lo! artfully, modishly, it was arranged. Her cheeks, her lips, were flushed with confusion and delight. "How absurd!" she laughed, and pulled it down.

But she found she could not return to her former thraldom. On entering the breakfast-room the next morning, she forestalled any exclamation from her mother by saying, "My hair seemed to hurt my head, so I have arranged it loosely. I hope it doesn't

look untidy."

"Untidy!" breathed her mother. "Never, never do yourself the injustice of wearing it otherwise. Drusilla, it—

you are beautiful!"

"Nonsense!" returned Drusilla, drawing the blind unnecessarily high in her nervousness. Unlike Narcissus, she had not lost, rather she had found, the sense of modesty in her sudden infatuation.

The girls completed the conquest. If Drusilla's hair was demoralized, judge of its effects upon her pupils. Singly and in pairs they came, at recess, to gaze. Drusilla flushed and frowned; at last, turned sharply upon them, demanding the meaning of their singular conduct.

"Oh, Miss West, you have the loveliest hair in the world!" cried the bravest girl, and she put her arm ecstatically about the teacher's waist,

as girls will.

"It was always the same hair," said Miss West, drily, and she quickly withdrew from the embrace, but returned to it, in spirit, afterward.

Forgotten were fifty-thousand-dollar cheques, broken contracts, history, duty. Drusilla was experiencing a return to nature, like a true, reincarnated Greek. In the city's shopwindows are many pitfalls. There lay in one a billow of lace.

"It must be some mistake," said

Drusilla, innocently complex, when her mother untied the string, and it lay revealed in all its creamy softness.

Mrs. West sighed and refolded it from sight, but Drusilla quietly smuggled it into her room upon retiring, and, in five minutes, she stood arrayed, considering the lily of her own loveliness. Nay, it was ridiculous; nay, it was childish, but one needs must have somebody to share one's enthusiasm. There was no one but her mother, and Drusilla was compelled to seek her.

"What do you think of this?" she cried, gaily, throwing open the door of her mother's room. "I tried it

on just for a joke."

Mrs. West came gropingly toward the radiant vision, the starry eyes, peach-tinted cheeks, gold-burnished hair.

"Drusilla, never take it off," she whispered, solemnly; and Drusilla laughed. But she bought the gown.

It was while in this state of chaos, that a problem presented itself in the following terms to Drusilla: "If one strand of hair will produce arevelation, what sort of revelation will a whole head of hair, plus a lace gown, produce?"

And receiving no answer, she waxed fretful, striving to solve it alone. At this point, she decided to send in her resignation as head of

the history department.

In the process of animal evolution, the final human stage is well marked by one departure. It is "the woman who tempts—" the male, designed for hardier attainments, resigning that pretty and mannish side of courtship to the lesser sex. Drusilla was but following the law of nature, but, though again and again she planned ways and means for the solving of her problem, natural instincts, when hermetically sealed for a lifetime, are apt to prove shy if asked to perform their office.

Had her probation endured much longer, she might have thrown up her new rôle in despair, and returned to her history, a sadder and wiser

woman; but, one soft, Spring afternoon, as she entered a crowded car, a tall, slight man, with his eyes fastened upon an open book, seeing only the feminine garb, arose, and, steadying himself by the strap, proffered her his seat.

Drusilla's heart flamed to her "Thank you-no," she protested; and then, as he gave a start of doubtful recognition, the car gave a lurch, and she sank into the seat.

"I beg your pardon," said Dexter, his hat still raised in bewilderment over the metamorphosis of form and attire, the flushed cheek, the shy, girlish smile of the eye. "I—" paused, awkwardly.

"It was good of you to give me your seat," she said, in a very low voice; "I am riding only a block, and

you were reading."

Here was safe footing. "Just a reference book," he returned, glancing at the big volume. "I'm never without some article relative to my work, as I ride to and fro. Did you say you were getting off at the corner? Then here you are."

She was fluttered, but not surprised,

when he stepped off with her.

"Essays?" she resumed, eying the book as they reached the curb and he continued by her side.

"What! This? Oh, no. This is a work on the Renaissance. I am compiling a summary, you know."

she cried. and ashamed of her impulsive warmth.

"Why not?" he questioned, amused, still hesitant, vastly inter-

"Oh, pardon. So absurd of me! But I — I, too, am — was — engaged

on a study of that period."

"That is a coincidence, indeed! But you speak of that period as though time was. Surely, it still is -never more positive than to-day?" His eyes enveloped her with sudden daring meaning.

"You-I-have many data," she hastened to say; "if you would care to see them——"

to see them——

"You are more than kind," he

returned, gently, awaiting his cue, standing with her as she paused be-

fore the little house.

"Then"—she drew a decisive sigh -"if you will come in some evening-" Her sentences had queer, unfinished endings; the smile had gone from her lips; she was almost

"To-morrow evening?" he asked,

unaccountably grave in turn.

"Yes," she said, in dismissal, and

he raised his hat.

"After all," thought Drusilla, somewhat excitedly, as she ran up the steps, "all things considered, it is only natural that the—starting-point should be-intellectual." But she wore the lace gown.

The rest is trite.

It was during the honeymoon there were no divorce proceedingsit was during the honeymoon that he asked her, quite innocently, one evening, who wrote the Declaration of Independence.

Mrs. Dexter puckered her brows. "For the moment, I can't think—I seem to have forgotten all my history," she answered, ity. "Who was it, Robert?" ' she answered, in frank vacu-

Robert threw back his head, and laughed inordinately; but, as his wife appeared surprised and hurt, he stopped and gave her an antithetical review of Drusilla, before, and after, taken.



SNOW STARS

TPON the mall And through the bars, The snowflakes fall In pretty stars;

Which stars aglow Again are found— Within the snow-Ball, hard and round,

By him, ne'er fear, Who, with his eye, Corrals that sphere Upon the fly!

R. K. MUNKITTRICK.



THE SOCIETY MOTHER

ISITOR—Has the baby any teeth yet? Mother—Teeth? Let me see; I believe the nurse did say something about teeth the other day, but I can't remember what it was.



HE female manicurist-and-chiropodist is the divinity that shapes our ends.

Feb. 1003

"IN SUCH A NIGHT"

A GAIN the old enchantress of the Night
Works her white magic, and beneath her thrall
Silence—the long-desired—lays claim to all
The parched dominion of Day's routed might.
Now in faint skies the stars watch soft and bright;
Now dim leaves whisper, and the low winds call
Gently across a gracious interval
Of dew and shadow and of mellow light.

In such a night, on *Juliet's* balcony,

Love broke to flower, like a budded rose,

And life grew wonderful with a new grace.

In such a night the ghosts of memory,

Emboldened by the hour, creep near and close,

And men with vanished dreams talk face to face.

ARTHUR KETCHUM.



PARADOXICAL

BLINKS—What would you do if you had a cool million? JINKS—I should have a hot time.



A CLERGYMAN told from his text
How Samson was barbered and vexed;
And told it so true
That a man in a pew
Got rattled, and shouted out, "Next!"



ADVICE

THERE are two millionaires after me—one, sixty; and the other, forty." "Well, dear, I would take the one at sixty—then you may have a chance at the other."



Many a bright and happy life has been ruined by a few ill-chosen words—the marriage ceremony, for instance.

ON WITH THE NEW

A DIALOGUE

By Felicia Goddard

CENE—An opera-box. The house is in darkness, and only the faint outline of a woman's head may be discerned. She is alone. Presently, the curtain at the back of the box is lifted, and a man enters. He sits down behind her. She does not turn her head.

HI

Good evening.

SHE

Oh, is it you? Good evening.

HE (after a pause)

Is lie here?

SHE

No, fortunately. I am alone.

HE

Darling!

SHE

Please be careful.

HE

I'm tired of being careful.

SHE

You know it was extremely careless of you to fall in love with me, at all.

ΗE

Careless? Why, dear, when I consider that, of the men who have the honor of your acquaintance, perhaps a third are not in love with you, I blush for my sex. Blind idiots!

SHE (pleasantly)

You are in very good form to-night; you outdo yourself.

HE

My feeling outdoes itself. Yesterday, I would have gone to the stake to 83

prove I could not love you more. To-night, simply I do. What is it? You are more adorable. You are both gentler, and more surprising. You have all the associations of an old love, and all the freshness of a new one. Yes, you are certainly more charming then ever. Could anything be more unnecessary! What have you been doing to yourself?

SHE (smiling)

Nothing that I remember, unless, perhaps, going through the mill helps one. (More seriously.) You have no idea what he has been like, lately. Oh, but something hideous—worse than before!

HE

Impossible!

SHE

So I should have thought, but he has. You know how well I have always borne his asking me to repeat every word I say, though he perfectly hears me. He says, "What?" on principle, so that he will have time to think of an answer, and, even then, it isn't always——

HE

I simply would not repeat.

SHE

Oh, if I don't, it is worse. Then, he makes up the most ridiculous things, and insists I said them—things I never could have thought of saying. One doesn't like to be thought an absolute fool, even by one's husband. To-day, I asked, quite innocently, if any one knocked. Of course, he said, "What?" I would not notice him at

all; so then he roared, "Did you say you wish to be an aeronaut?" I said, "I didn't, but I think it would have its compensations." Then, he was hurt—supposed I wished to be rid of him. There you are! That's my life!

HE

It's not to be borne, for you of all women.

SHE

And his curiosity! You would not believe it! Whenever there are people at the house, he always comes into the room, saying, "What, what, what?"—so afraid of missing something; and, if I say, just to give him a hint, "No one was speaking to you, dear," he answers: "No, no one ever is." So tiresome, particularly before people! It makes them think I'm not kind to him.

ΗE

Why should you be?

SHE

Well, it is disagreeable to have him always poking about among one's things, and listening to what one says to the cook. To-day, he opened one of my letters. (*Penswely*.) That's why he isn't here this evening. He wouldn't come. He's so irritable! One would think that if I kept my temper, he might, too.

HE (anxiously)

It was not my letter, was it?

SHE

Just as bad, dear—a dressmaker's bill. He said he thought it was directed to "Mr." The "Mrs." was just as plain as a pike-staff.

ΗЕ

Well, of course, it was then all the easier to make him pay it.

SHE (calmly)

Oh, of course, he will have to pay it; but one does not like to be commented on, does one? It was just an average bill for my Autumn things, and what do you think he asked? How many years it had been running! I answered,

"Just three months," and he said he had not spent so much on his tailor in three years. I said, "Why should you?" Of course, it does not make the least difference what he puts on.

uт

And what did he say?

SHE

Oh, he said, "What?" of course.

HE (passionately)

Dearest, look! It really can't go on like this. It is not possible; you know it. Wouldn't it be wiser, kinder, better, to come away with me forever and be happy?

SHE

Oh, you must not say such things. For me, I feel I have no obligations; but you—

нв

My wife? She would not care—not as long as she had her house to look after. She wouldn't remember my existence. It's her only excitement. And she is a wonderful house-keeper.

SHE (sweetly)

Oh, do you think so?

HE (defiantly)

Yes, I do.

SHE (still sweetly)

How funny, men never notice things—like steps, for instance, and the second man's livery—those every-day things, you know. I should never have supposed she took much interest in her house.

HE (grimly)

I wish you heard as much about it as I do. For ten days, she hasn't said anything more interesting than to ask me about cementing the cellar, and putting in new window-frames.

SHE

Fancy your being worried about such things!

HE (temperately)

Oh, it's all right, I suppose. Woman's sphere is the home, and all that sort of thing, but it is hard, when I come

home with some little piece of news that I think will amuse her, to see she is just waiting until I finish to ask me if I've sent the brougham to be done over.

SHE

My dear, I've long since given over trying to amuse. Whenever I save up a little story to-enliven my husband at dinner, he always worms it out of me by his eternal questions, before I have time to tell it.

HE

How outrageous! I had no idea he was that sort of person. He seems so serious, so weighed down with his responsibilities——

SHE (laughing)

His responsibilities! How absurd you are!

HE

But there is a limit to your powers of endurance. Why should you waste your lovely self on him, when I am waiting for you? Come, say yes, and my yacht will take us to-morrow, anywhere you say, and you shall be happy. Say yes.

(A short silence in which something occurs.)

SHE (excitedly)

Are you mad? You must not do that sort of thing! My dear man, remember where we are. Oh, I know what you'll say! You'll say I wasn't angry the other time; but that was different, and you know it.

HE

The other time!

SHE (courageously, unconscious of his emphasis)

Yes, the *other* time. I'm not ashamed to admit you have kissed me once before.

 $_{\mathrm{HE}}$

Once!

SHE (without hearing)

But, then, you had reasons—that lovely garden, and the moon, and the fact that I was unhappy. But, to-night, there is no excuse for your losing your head.

HE

There's you, dear, ten times more dangerous than ever. Before I was sure, I could be patient; but since yesterday, since you told me you loved me—

SHE (wildly)

I didn't! I didn't! What do you mean? I never did!

HE

Darling, have you forgotten, or do you expect me to forget? Why, I remember the chauffeur, and, as for the waiter, I can shut my eyes, and see him now. I remember the palms, and the china, and the brand of champagne. Do you suppose I shall forget your look, your voice, let alone your words?

SHE

What are you talking about?

HE (angrily)

By heaven, you shall not play with me like this! You leaned across the table, one hand folded over the other, and said: "Leon, I love you."

SHE

One of us is crazy, Dick!

(Here the act, which has been drawing to a close, ends. The lights going up, they discover that they are total strangers.)

HE (after a pause, rising)

There is a very fortunate man in this world, madame!

SHE (icily)

Do not let me detain you, sir. Some one, I think, is expecting you.

NIK.

 ${
m W}^{
m HEN}$ a man's wife feeds and pets him, he feels he is being treated like a dog.

THE PRINTER'S VALENTINE

Behold, my pet, this type I set in my composingstick, with every space and point in place just watch me do the trick! And this I do because 'tis you alone for whom I pine; I wish to make for your sweet sake, a printer's valentine. Your "make-up's" neat from head to feet; your cheeks are peaches ripe; no artist yet has ever set for Love so clean a "type." Come, then, to me, and I will be your loyal knight and brave; I'll even try to eat your "pi" and be your "galley"-slave. My speech is kind, as you will find—I use no harsh retorts nor words uncouth, because, for-sooth, I'm never "out of sorts." Pray hesitate no more to mate, nor hold from me aloof; my heart is all your own just call upon me for the "proof." I shall not roam away from home, with other girls to sup; I'll not refuse, if you so choose, to let you "lock me up." You are the girl I call my "pearl"—my "diamond;" and you, in any "case," are fair of "face," in "old style" or in As violet ink oft makes me think of corresponding eyes, so when in "gold" I print, behold, I know you're just my "size." So put away your doubts, and say you'll be my Valentine. Oh, do not "kill" the hopes that fill this inky heart of mine! Love waits to "feed" the press—you need say nothing more than, "Yes!" I end my rhyme because it's time to "send your form to press!"

FRANK ROE BATCHELDER.



AN actress of note there was, viz,
Bernhardt, who spoke English but liz.
Her hearers were vexed
When she murdered the text,
And therefore applauded but tiz.

28

THE worth of a kiss is determined by its face value.

LA DONNA DELLA FINESTRA

By Justus Miles Forman

ING stood at the head of the amidships, companionway, firmly grasping in one hand a very small sum of money, and tried to remember if there was any one on board ship whom he had not tipped. He went over the list with a conscientious mind—cabin steward, saloon steward, smoke-room steward, deck steward, boots, the A. B. forward, who had taught him that queer dance step, the steward of the pretty Canadian girl who had performed for him certain important services not usually required of stewards. He had a humorous notion to go below and fee the stokers and trimmers—it seemed rather unfair to leave them out—but a glance at the sum in his hand checked him. There was one five-pound note, several francs in silver, a note of ten lire, one sixpence, and three dollars and twenty cents in American money.

"Oh, well," he said, comfortably, "after all, it's a lot more than I shall need. Two dollars will take me uptown."

Passengers dashed up and down the companionway, in a last, breathless hunt for mislaid umbrellas or rugs. White-jacketed stewards in pairs, carrying cabin trunks, shoved him aside, and other stewards with sad faces peered anxiously at him, mistaking him for some other passenger who had been cruelly withholding a hard-earned tip.

He dropped the handful of money into his pocket, and moved out to the starboard deck, and forward, where the cabin luggage was being heaped in rows, and a great knot of semi-hysterical passengers stood crowded

at the rail, waving sticks and handkerchiefs, which no one but the morose deckhands of a river tug could see. They looked very odd, these people whom he had known for a week, the women in big hats and veils and long skirts, and the men with their sunburned faces shaded by bowler hats or panamas. He had known them only in short skirts and golf capes and plaid traveling caps.

A very large lady, who had been ill every day since leaving Cherbourg, had lost her purse, and pushed her way excitedly up and down the deck, screaming that she had been robbed and that nobody should leave the ship without being searched. King picked up the missing purse from under the heel of a steward, and found a place by the starboard rail, where he could watch the busy river, with its tugs and excursion steamers and ferryboats, and the ugliest sky-line in the world towering monstrously above.

The ship was rapidly approaching the pierhead, which was a mass of black and white and color, with waving things aloft, and Mr. King was very much entertained by a woman beside him, who insisted to her husband that she could see Molly and Arthur and Annie and the baby, before it was possible even to be certain that the swaying mass on the pierhead was composed of human beings. King watched, hanging over the broad rail, with a tolerant and amused eye. He was a little sorry that he himself could feel none of this enthusiastic elation. He had gone by all that long since, as any one must who spends half of his life abroad. But, on the whole, he was glad that he had not to fall into the arms of a hysterical family circle as he stepped from the gangplank, and be interrogated, in five keys at once, as to just how he had liked it all.

He wondered, as the big ship was pushed slowly into her berth, and he could look down into the throng of faces on the pierhead, if any one could have chanced to come down to meet him—Henesey, or Walter Dyett, or Greenley, or any of the set. He wondered who of them might be in town, so early in September. And then, all at once, he gave a shout, which quite outdid the emotional woman beside him, and waved his hat aloft; for down there in the hot sunshine, somewhat apart from the crowd and leaning nonchalantly against the pier shed, was Henesey, long and lean and calm and unhurrying, one shoulder a little up in the air, as always, panamahatted and immaculately gray-flanneled. He looked more than ever like Sir Archie in "The Toreador." The sun caught his monocle, and flashed from it like a mirror, as he raised gravely interrogative head inspect the huddled crowd at the steamer rail, but he gave no sign of recognition at Mr. King's repeated shouts.

He was at the foot of the gang-plank, though, when Mr. King descended, and his greetings were as effusive as if the two had met on the street after a few

hours' separation.

"Have a good time?" he inquired. "Fool to come back—beastly weather—nobody in town." And there was no more to be had out of him till they were settled in a cab, with King's luggage on top, and rolling up-town. Then, Henesey volunteered the information that he was out of it for dinner. "Some people havin' a party in Brooklyn-people you don't knowcan't see why people want to have parties in Brooklyn." Walter Dyett? No, Walter wasn't in town. Up in the playin' about. And Adirondacks, Greenley, he was at Newport, and Jimmy Rogers—God knew where Jimmy Rogers might be! Hobnobbin' with

princesses, probably.

They stopped at Martin's—just to feel natural—leaving the cab, with its heap of luggage, at the curb. And Martin's was quite the same, rather nice and cool, and not too light. There were not many people about, only the habitués, French old gentlemen, dozing over an absinthe and the Figaro. The big, pink-cheeked "bouncer" came over to shake hands with Monsieur King, and demand where he had been since four months. And the pretty little telephone girl, on her way through the café to her booth, nodded and smiled to him. It seemed rather good and homelike, as familiar things must, but not so good as he had hoped. There was none of the genuine, comfortable thrill that he had counted

He stared gloomily out of the window into Broadway, and the nervous rush of it annoyed him. He found the yellow, clanging street-cars ugly, and the buildings huge and misshapen. And he made unpleasant mental comments upon the appearance of the people who dashed along the street in

such a desperate hurry.

"No place to live, this!" he growled, morosely, to the placid Henesey. "I wish I'd stopped where I was. I think I'm sorry I came back."

"Ah!" said Mr. Henesey. "Girl!" he ejaculated, with conviction. "Good thing you came home, I expect. Where'd you leave her?"

"I don't know what you're talking

about," said his friend, coldly.

Then, when Henesey had gone away, shaking his head in sorrowful disapprobation, he fell to staring out across the café, with a queer, fixed smile, and his mind went, all in a flash, back to the blue skies and a bluer lake, to soft, warm-scented winds, and a voice that sang, to snow-peaks that loomed in the North, pink and blue and pearl at sunset—and to certain eyes.

"No place to live, this," he said again, and a stab of loneliness and

distaste and heartsickness and pain went through him, sharp and fierce.

"I wish I'd stopped!" he cried, under his breath; "I wish I'd stopped." Then, in a moment, his eyes came back to Broadway, ugly and crowded and familiar, and he fell to laughing, softly.

"Come, come!" said he. "This is home, home! And I'm glad to be at home again—glad;" and he rose with

a little sigh, "glad, of course."

He drove up to his rooms in the Cadogan, and, as he had written to say when he would return, they were opened and aired, but a note on the writing-table said that his man, whom he had released for the Summer, could not return for a week.

One of the hall porters brought in the bags and the cabin trunk, and asked if he should unpack them, but King said no, he would unpack them himself; and, when the man had gone, he sat for a long time on the window-seat, staring quite idly at the heap of luggage.

"Yes, it's good to be at home again," said he, after half an hour, but his tone was not at all convincing. He wandered at random about the rooms, mechanically setting right something here and there which had been disturbed, and he even went so far as to unstrap and unlock the cabintrunk, and to throw some of the things out over the near-by chairs.

"What am I going to do to-night?" he demanded, presently. "Ned will be in Brooklyn, and Walter's away. Jimmy Rogers—I wish I knew where Jimmy Rogers is. What the deuce—!" His eye fell upon a large photograph which stood on the mantel-shelf, a picture of a very handsome young woman in evening dress, who sat in a chair of carved wood, and looked out upon the world rather critically from under slightly raised brows.

"Ah!" said Mr. King, and went over to the mantel-shelf, with a little, inquiring smile of interest. He knew that he ought to feel a certain positive thrill at sight of the picture. He knew that, even if everything else had failed to make him glad of his return, this should succeed, should drive out of his mind all that had been filling it since he had left New York, three months before. He had the grace, even, to be a little ashamed, a little apologetic, that he had not gone at once to the picture, on entering the room; that he had not, at the first possible moment, greeted it, instead of

waiting for this accident.

He stood before the mantel-shelf, with his hands resting upon it, one at either side of the big photograph, and smiled gravely into the young woman's eyes, waiting for the thrill which ought to come. And, as he waited, he realized, all at once, how very important this moment was. He realized that it was this photograph, or rather what this photograph represented, which had really brought him back to America; that it was the last hope, as it were, the final argument in the plea for home and all the home things; that, if this failed, something of great moment must occur, to alter his whole life.

He waited, smiling into the girl's face with a sort of humorous gravity, and, after a little, the saving thrill came to him. He told himself that it came. If it lacked something of the old-time strength and fire, that was only natural. After all, a photograph was a poor thing. When he should see Her, it would be different. He would fall, all in an instant, into the old life, and quite forget—what must be forgotten.

He crossed the room briskly, with a certain relieved smile, and went to the telephone which hung in a corner. He called for a number which would have seemed to lie somewhere in upper Fifth avenue.

'Yes," said he, in apparent reply to some question; "yes, Miss Vernon, Miss Eleanor Vernon, if she is at home. Tell her Mr. Hamilton King."

Then, after a few moments of waiting, his smile deepened, and a little flush

came into his cheeks.

"Yes, it's I," he said, and one might have noticed that the tone of his voice had altered somewhat. "Yes, got in

an hour ago. So am I glad. I hardly expected to find you in town. It's still so beastly hot! No. Henesey has deserted me. Gone to Brooklyn. I'm rather désolé. Will you let me come up for dinner? I want to see you so, you know! No, I suppose it's not very proper, with the mater out of town. What are you doing, all anyhow? Well, alone. there, awfully good of you. Of course, I'll come. Anyhow, it isn't as if we were quite strangers, is it? Seven, then? Good-bye! I say, you know, it's rather good to hear your voice again. Ah, well, good-bye!"

He hung up the receiver, and went back, with a new and smiling energy, to the half-emptied cabin-trunk and the heap of traveling bags. But, in the upper tray, he came upon certain articles, seemingly of small value, at the sight of which the eager smile faded, bit by bit, and another smile came in its place, quite another sort of smile, half-frowning, very strange—one over which Henesey would have been greatly perturbed if he could have seen it.

He sat on the edge of a chair, heaps and drifts of clothes surrounding him, his eyes rather wide and fixed, his elbows on his knees, and, in his hands, the certain articles—seemingly of small value. Blue skies and a bluer lake, snow-peaks that loomed in the North, pink and blue and pearl at sunset; warm winds over gardens—and a voice that sang! He found himself singing her song, under his breath, very low:

"Ogni sera di sotto al mio balcone, Sento cantar una canzon d' amore."

Just by closing one's eyes, one could hear her voice, deep and full and shaking, the gold of sound—could hear the throb of her guitar, see the curve of her cheek and throat against the dark—smell the rose that hung always from her black hair.

He crossed the room, stepping among the heaps of littered clothes, to the piano, and threw it open with a bang that gave no heed to bruised varnish; and there, smiling still his fixed, strange smile, he played, very softly, the song she had loved and sung; and there was no stretch of time between those golden evenings in the garden by the lake, and now—no stretch of continent and ocean. It was yesterday.

Ogni sera di sotto al mio balcone, Sento cantar una canzon d' amore.

Oh, quanto è dolce quella melodia! Oh, com' e bella quanto m' è gradita!

Stringimi, oh, cara, stringimi al tuo core! Fami provar l'ebrezze dell'amor!

It would seem to have been a long while that he sat at the piano; by times, playing, with a little murmur of song—under the breath, with half-shut eyes and lips that smiled; by times, falling into long spells of idle silence. It was the striking of six o'clock from the mantel-shelf that roused him.

"Eh, what?" said he, frowning and blinking at the little clock. "Six? Can't be! Where's the afternoon gone? Six o'clock, and these cursed bags not even unpacked!

"Stringimi, oh, cara—al tuo core! Fami provar l'ebrezze dell'amor!

"Wake up! wake up! oh, man, wake up!

"That's all shove be'ind me—long ago an'
fur away,
An' there ain't no 'busses runnin' from
the Bank to Mandalay.'

"Wake up, and dress!"

He selected certain articles of adornment from the heaps on the floor about him, and shuffled away toward the bath-room, whistling defiantly a raucous ditty of the music halls.

"Yes," said the girl, "it seems very good to see you again, very good! How brown you are, aren't you? that is due to the voyage, of course—I'm even glad," she declared, smiling cheerfully at him across the table, "that mother is away and we can be quite tête-à-tête, though, of course, it's not at all proper. Oh, yes, I know, we aren't strangers; but, then, there are certain things—ah, well,

let's just be glad that you're here. Did you have an amusing time? I wish we'd gone over. I've had a nightmare of a Summer—Adirondacks-Paul Smith's, you know-and then Cape May—Cape May, of all places!—and some Newport—Newport grows more impossible each year. Actually, I was glad when September came, and I don't remember ever to have been glad of that before. I wish we'd gone to the other side. Did you see Gerald Livingstone anywhere? Mr. Rogers is in America, again, you know. I saw him at Newport. Now, begin and tell me You are what you've been doing. always doing such curious things! Of course, you are glad to be at home again, aren't you?"

"Glad?" said King, with a little start of attention; "glad? Oh, yes, yes, of course, I'm glad, very!"

But the girl shook her head at him, humorously, and laughed.

"No, not that way," said she; "not that way at all. Say it as if you meant it."

"Oh, I mean it, right enough," he insisted. "Of course, I'm glad to be at home. One always is. I'm glad to be back at home again and to—see—people, and all that sort of thing, don't you know. Why, this afternoon when I reached the Cadogan, and saw your picture standing on the mantel, it gave me quite a turn, really it did, quite a genuine thrill. I wanted to go up to it and kiss it and tell it how nice it was."

The girl frowned at him for a moment, and then laughed again.

"You would seem to have lost a certain skill," said she. "You used to do this sort of thing much better. And, furthermore," she went on, severely, "I give you warning that my pictures are not to be treated in any such frivolous manner. I shall take them away if you're not properly respectful toward them. You know very well that I objected, anyhow, to your having that one on view in your rooms. It's very bad form indeed—ah, well, go on! You were

saying that you were honestly glad to be at home once more and to see —people. I'm sure it's very civil of you."

"Yes, I'm glad," he said again. "One should be, should he not? One should live in his home where his friends are—the friends he has known all his life—the people who are his sort, who live his sort of life, who do the things he does. A chap belongs there—in his home—doesn't he? Don't you think so?"

He leaned across the table with its silver and glass and flowers, and its shaded candles, and his eyes were brighter than their wont, eager, and more anxious in their demand than the subject seemed to warrant. "Don't you think so?" he asked again. "He's surer of happiness, the nice, quiet sort of happiness, there, in his home, among his friends, than anywhere else, don't you think so? He belongs there, doesn't he? It would be foolish, a bit mad, for him to go wandering after strange gods. He'd much better stop at home and live the life he was bred to. Don't you think I'm right?"

The girl watched him, across the table, frowning a little. She watched his flushed cheeks and his eager, anxious eyes, that seemed to appeal to her to settle some question greater than she knew.

"Yes," she said, slowly; "oh, yes, you're quite right! Of course, you're right. He's best at home, far best. wonder what— Yes, he's best at home among the people who know him and ---appreciate him. I suppose something has happened to you-something unsettling—to make you think of all this. Not that that makes any difference, of course," she hurried on. She was very anxious not to seem curious, not to seem to be asking confidences. "For the fact remains quite the same whether it is applied to you or to any other particular man. Following after strange gods is a very dangerous thing, and most unsatisfactory, I'm told, in the end."

Mr. King dropped back in his chair,

smiling, as it were, with a sort of relief, and he nodded his head toward the

girl, approvingly.

"That's what I said you'd say," he declared. "That's just what I said you'd say. But I wanted to hear you say it. Oh, yes, and you're right, too. I fancy you're nearly always right. You look at things so sensibly! Yes, I'm—one is best at home. It's sane and quiet and comfortable there, and—one isn't stirred up so much. Home for me! I tell you, I'm glad to be here again. It's where I belong, isn't it?"

But the girl was looking at him very steadily and with a puzzled little frown, as if there were something about him that she could not quite make out.

"I don't under-Then, presently, "I don't understand," she said. "There is something that I can't reach or see-something important. Something has been happening to you that has almost taken you away from—us. You are trying to argue yourself, and to make me help you argue yourself, into the belief that your life here is better than something which has been tempting you—as it surely is better." She leaned forward a little toward him, resting her arms on the table, among the glasses and silver things, and her eves still frowned, puzzled and somewhat anxious.

"You know," she said, slowly, "I'm always a bit afraid when you are wandering off alone—heaven knows where; afraid lest we shall lose you, lest something extraordinary shall happen to you. You're not quite like the rest of us, after all. There's a drop of something different in your blood. It has always been there. Strange things are always happening to you—queer adventures. Other men—the men you know best and go about with—might do the same things that you do, go to the same places, meet the same people, and nothing out of the common would occur. vou draw adventure like a magnet. I wonder why. Some people would call it temperament, I suppose. I expect you feel things that we don't, see things that we don't, and all that. Yes, it's temperament, of course. And, now, something has been happening to take you away from—us; the strange gods have been calling. I wonder how. It's somewhere you've been, I suppose—some one you've met. Where is it you've been? Scheveningen, you said, and Homburg and the Berner Oberland, and the lakes. Ah, the lakes! Why, what would you be doing at the lakes in August? It's intolerably hot there in August."

Mr. King stirred his coffee, with an apparent absorption of interest. Then, after a little, he looked up, and his face

had flushed a bit.

"It was a girl," said he, simply. don't know why I shouldn't tell. It's something 'shove be'ind me'-something that's got to be forgotten, so I don't know why I shouldn't tell though you won't understand, at all. It's not the sort of thing you would understand. I spent the last three weeks of August at the lakes, on Lago Maggiore, I needn't say where. It was very, very hot; but it might have been hotter, and I shouldn't have noticed. I met a girl there, I needn't say how. She was the most beautiful thing I have ever seen, or ever shall see. I fancy there is no woman in Europe more beautiful. Certainly, I know that God has made no other so lovely. She was a flower. She lived with her father in a villa near a certain town. The villa stood in its great garden near the lake's edge, and the girl used often to sit, in the cool of the day, at a certain window that looked out over the water, so that the boatmen and the peasants of the country-side called her 'Madonna della Finestra.' And that was very curious, because she was extraordinarily like Rossetti's Donna della Finestra.

"Her father was an Englishman, who had married an Italian woman of very high rank, and had thrown up his life and his concerns in England to live in the Italy that she loved. His wife died more than ten years ago, and he had loved her so that he him-

self almost died, but not quite, so that he hid himself from the world with his daughter and his books, and made of himself a virtual hermit. In the Spring and Summer and Autumn, they live at the villa on Maggiore. In the Winter, they live in Rome, I believe. I did him some slight service in a boating accident, and, for some strange reason, he took a liking to me—for a time, that is. Afterward, he forgot about me, for he is buried in his books. He forgot about me, and left me to sit in the garden with—with Her."

King was speaking in a very quiet and unemotional tone. It seemed as if he had intentionally forced all feeling from his voice, so that it was left cold and measured. But the flush persisted in his face, and the veins stood out on his forehead with a certain unnatural prominence. His hands twisted and strained together on the table before him, like the hands of a gambler who has schooled his face to an immobile mask.

"There was nothing English about her," he went on, in his cold, steady tone, "nothing English, save certain things, which cannot be described, in the modeling of her face. She was all Italian. She knew nothing of the world beyond her garden walls, save a very little of Rome. Her father took her nowhere, gave her no society. I do not think he cared greatly for her. I think all his love was dead. He had worshiped his wife more than most men can understand. Did I say that the girl had a voice? She had a voice to charm the beasts and birds, to make the flowers of her garden hear. She had a voice to shake the heart in you fill your dreams—tremble in your ears all your life long. It was a contralto voice, and it was too wonderful to tell about—I am sorry. She used to sing, with a guitar, in the evening, when the sun had gone down, and the pearl had faded out of the snow-peaks to the North, and the night was coming. Do you know the 'Musica Proibita' of Gastaldon?-

-she used to sing that. It was her favorite. You know it is very foolish of me to go on about her singing, because words cannot give the littlest, faintest notion of what music is like. I have heard all the great operatic voices—of to-day, that is—and I have heard many hundreds of others, but they were mere voices, more or less carefully trained to render vocal music. They do not haunt one, quiver always in one's ears, tingle in one's blood. Perhaps, it was because she felt very deeply when she was singing. Have you ever held a bird in your hand while it sang? Its whole body throbs and trembles with the notes. For the moment, it is nothing but music alivein the flesh. She was like that. I can hear her quite plainly, now, if I shut my eyes—oh, very plainly!"

He dropped his head into his hands, with his elbows on the table before him, as if he were tired.

"That is all, I fancy," said he. "That tells it all, doesn't it?"

But the girl stirred, suddenly, in her chair, with a little, quick sigh. She was no longer frowning, but her eyes were very steadily fixed on Mr. King's face, and they seemed darker than common, with a certain sober intensity. She was somewhat pale.

"All?" she said, sharply; "all? Of course, it is not all! Why do you say that? It is only the beginning. is only one side of the thing. Oh, yes, in a way, it is all. You have something about you, as I said before, something in your blood, a restlessness, a hunger for romance, that we, who live ordinary lives here, can't satisfy. You've met this wonderful girl with the wonderful voice, under all sorts of romantic-opera conditions, and you've fallen in love with her—or think you have. It was like a story in a book—some very absurd and over-sentimental story, and it caught your fancy at once. You love picturesqueness—and that is what you term 'all'! I tell you, it is only one side, and a theatrical, strained side, at that."

She stirred again, uneasily, in her chair, and the frown returned.

[&]quot;Ogni sera di sotto al mio balcone

"I don't understand," she said, in a tone that bore a certain irritation, a certain resentfulness; "I don't understand. It seems so forced, so—cheap. If you were a weak man or a foolish one, if you'd no stability of mind, or were a mere impressionable boy, one might make allowances; but you are none of these things. I don't understand."

King dropped his two hands upon the table, among the glasses, with a little, hopeless gesture. He shook his head slowly from side to side, smiling across at the girl—but his eyes did not smile.

"No," said he, "no, you wouldn't understand. Nothing could make you understand. I said so in the beginning, didn't I?"

But the girl swept on, impatiently, and the note of irritation, almost of anger, grew more and more pronounced

as she spoke.

"It's all so theatrical—so cheap!" she cried again. "It's all such a tissue of moonshine and madness-of emotion and drama! Can't you see how cheap it is? Can't you see that it's nothing but a bit of highly-colored romance that you've been pretending was important? Can't you see that it wouldn't last a year out, or six months, or three? Oh, you pay us a poor compliment—your friends here, who-who care about you and-understand you, and live your life; to be almost ready to throw us over for something that has caught your artistic fancy! What can she give you, this Italian girl, with her beautiful face and her beautiful voice, that we cannot? I say, what can she give you in exchange for the sane, good life that lies here in your home?"

King dropped his face into his hands once more, and the fingers strained

and shook a little, hiding it.

"Why will you ask me such things?" he groaned. "Why do you want to torment me? Haven't I told you that it is all over, that I have come back to stay? Why will you drag it all up again? Great heaven! can't you see how I want to forget—how I must forget?"

"I dare not let it alone," said she. "I must make you see how empty and wrong it is. Oh, you may tell me, if you choose, that I am meddling with what does not concern me, that I am curious and interfering and anything you like, but I will speak. I stand, at the moment, for your home and your friends and all your career here, and you are trembling, much nearer than you realize, to the verge of throwing it all over for a dream that has caught your imagination. In a weak moment, you might go. Oh, I must show you how impossible it is! What can she give you that we cannot?"

"Life," said King, with his face in his hands; and the voice was a half-whisper. "And that you've never known. And one other thing, and that you've never known. You say it is a dream, the thing I have given up. You're wrong. This play here is the dream, this gray comedy of lies and pretenses, this piece where every player knows just what the others will do, this dreary round of dullness. I tell you, this is the dream, not that. Life? Oh, it would be screamingly funny if only it weren't a tragedy, a dreary, uninspired tragedy. Life!" He raised his face from his straining hands, and it was a face that the girl had never seen-drawn and flushed and bitter.

"What do you know about life?" he demanded; "vou and the little set of well-dressed, well-behaved imitation marionettes, that you call your friends, and I call my friends. What do you know about life? You live out your existence, going the tiny round that your mother and your father went before you. You do the things you're told to do, and think the things that the other people around you think, and say the things they say. You have your little interests and your little joys and sorrows and ambitions and disappointments. And all of them could be put in a cigar-box—pardon me—in a jewel casket. What do you know about real life, you who are tied down to a set of gray conventions that others like you have made? I say

this play of yours is the dream—a feeble, futile dream—and life is yonder."

"Is it a dream?" said she. "Why, then, it is your dream as well as mine. Is it a feeble, futile dream? one that we all must live till we're let out of it in the one way. At least, it is a sane dream, my friend, and, perhaps, not so futile as you think. And it can't be thrown old coat. A man aside like an doesn't live quite to himself. You're part of a machine, here; every one is. You have your responsibilities, you know."

"Dreams," said he, not raising his

"And your friendships," said she.
"Dreams!" said King, from be-

tween his fingers.

"You'd grow so very, very tired of it!" she persisted. "You'd want to come back to the world that you know—the world that knows you.'

But he made no answer.

"Beautiful things fade," said she, wistfully. "Romance must die; even love cools, loses its keenness. One's glad of the little interests and the gray comedy and the little ambitions and disappointments, then."

But he made no answer, only the

fingers strained over his face.

'You have your responsibilities," she said, again. Then, a little momentary flash of anger, of resentment at his silence, seemed all at once to flare out.

"What can she give you?" she cried. "You say this world of ours is a mist of dreams. What is this life out yonder that you prate of?"

"What is it?" said he, aloud, and his hands dropped with a thud upon the table. He took a great, deep, shivering breath, that filled his chest and lifted his shoulders—seemed bodily to raise him from his seat; and his eyes blazed.

"What is it?" said he, in a shaking "Oh, it is—it is—it—" But voice. his tongue stammered and would not find the words, and, in an instant, the great breath went from his lungs, and

the light from his eyes, and the fixed smile from his face. He drooped in

his seat, hanging his head.

"I do not know what it is," he con-"I cannot tinued, with a little sigh. make the words. It is something that you have never known and will never know. I cannot tell what it is." And he sat a long time silent, with his head sunken upon his breast, and his fingers playing absently among the glasses and silver before him.

"There was a man tried it before you," said she, presently, "the Englishman, the father. He seems to have wrecked his life, does he not?

Don't you suppose he regrets?"

"He had," said Hamilton King, not raising his eyes, "he had twelve years of such happiness as neither you nor I dare think of or try to imagine. I do not believe he regrets, though he gave up a peerage in England to do what he did. I would give up a kingdom for one of those years."

"Is she, by chance," said Miss Vernon, with a little note of stiffness in her voice, "is she, by chance, a girl whom you could bring here into our world? Could you not have your 'life,' but still live in your home, among your friends? Must you go and never come back?"

"If I went," said he, very low, "I should never come back. There

would be no coming back."

The girl rose from the table, with a quick sigh, and went toward the door of the dining-room. The movement seemed, as it were, to break the spell which had been over them, and, turning back toward Mr. King, she laughed, a rather uncertain little laugh.

"Dear me, what a tragedy we're making over nothing!" said she. "And how worked up we've become! You are not going back to your little Italian drama, and this is a very, very palpable world about us here, not at all a dream. Do you realize that we've been at the table three hours? It's almost ten o'clock."

They went out of the big diningroom and through the hall to a cozier, more comfortable room beyond. King's face was pale and stern, and his lips were drawn tightly together. The girl watched him with eyes that had gone back almost to their former seriousness.

"For you are here to stay, aren't you?" she asked. "You meant what you said, didn't you? You're going to forget all—all that, to make believe it never occurred?"

But King was watching the pearl and rose die out of the great snowpeaks to the North, and the Summer night, cool and sweet, grow out of the lake. He was watching the lights spring out like fireflies in the little villages across the water, and listening to the plash of waves and to the cheep of drowsy birds from the cypress There were odors abroad on the night, sweet odors that came blended in a wonderful perfume. There were flowers in plots and borders. There were shrubs standing thick, a wilderness of them. There were trees, lemon and olive and fig magnolia. Birds rustled and murmured in their branches. A night breeze bore up over the low wall from the lake, and She sat beside him on the cracked stone bench, her head against his shoulder, touching the strings of her guitar in slow, soft chords. The fragrance of her hair went to his veins like a liqueur. lift and stir of her breathing set him a-trembling. Then she sang, over her breath, a golden, quivering murmur:

"Ogni sera di sotto al mio balcone."

King pressed his hands to his eyes, for an instant, as if he would shut out something from sight, then he dropped them beside him again, with a little sigh.

"What is that for?" said Miss Vernon, watching by the mantel.

"I sighed," said Mr. King, "at the passing of a strain of music—the echo of a song that I've loved indifferent well."

But the girl leaned back against the tall mantel, spreading her arms a bit, and opening her palms. "Can we give you nothing to comfort you for its passing?" said she, very low, and her pose and her tone lent the words a certain significance far beyond their formal meaning, a significance that he could not misunderstand.

He took a step forward, flushing suddenly, and his hands went out toward her; but, after a moment, he turned away and stood alone at the other end of the onyx mantel, fingering a certain glass vase which stood there, and frowning at it.

Presently, he turned again to the girl, shaking his head, and putting out a hand.

"Come!" said he. "I must be going on. It grows late. I—I'm afraid I've been very dull and not at all amusing. I'm afraid I shouldn't have got to talking about—about all that sort of thing. It seems to have stirred me up a bit. I'll go and turn in. Good night! It was kind of you to let me come up. I fancy everything you've said is quite true, but I'm—stirred up a bit—as I said. Good night! I shall see you soon, I expect."

He took his hat and stick—he had brought no top-coat because the weather was so warm—and went out into the Avenue. A cab pulled up at the curb, and the driver raised an interrogative finger, but Mr. King shook his head, and turned south, on fact.

He walked slowly, beating his stick on the pavement with each step, and the night breeze, dusty and heavy with the reek of asphalt though it was, felt cool and sweet against his face—seemed somehow to clear away the fog that clouded his brain.

He paused a moment outside the Metropolitan Club, but shook his head once more, and held on down the Avenue past the Plaza, and, presently, past the towering spires of the cathedral.

In his rooms at the Cadogan, he fell over the littered traveling bags, and cursed them languidly while he switched on the electric lights. "I suppose I must empty those things, and shove them out of the way," said he, regarding them with a malevolent eye. But in the top tray of the cabin-trunk lay, plain to view, the certain articles—seemingly of small value.

An hour later, he dropped down before the open piano, and his fingers strayed idly over the keys in chords that might never be forgotten:

> Stringimi, oh, cara—al tuo core! Fami provar l'ebrezze dell'amor!

He sprang, desperately, to his feet with a low cry, and his hands went over his ears.

"Stop it! stop it!" he groaned; "oh, stop it! I can't bear any more!"

The night wind bore through the lemon-trees and over the late roses, stirred her hair against his cheek. Her head turned on his shoulder, and there came the old, slow chords from the guitar.

"Stop it! stop it!" cried King,

standing beside the piano.

A *Herald* lay open on one of the chairs beside him, and he seized it swiftly, turning to the shipping news.

K. M. Theresa... | Sept. 12 | Naples, Genoa. Moltke.... | Sept. 12 | Hamburg. Campania... | Sept. 12 | Liverpool. La Savoie... | Sept. 13 | Havre.

To-morrow would be September the twelfth. He raised his eyes, over the top of the newspaper, and they met the eyes of the girl who sat above the mantel, and looked rather critically out upon the world; but King shook his head at her, and made a little ceremonious bow. "Good-bye, Miss Vernon," said he, smiling excitedly; "I'm leaving in the morning for Italy. Good-bye!"

2

A DISCORD IN TWO FLATS

Oh, haste—I am deadly afraid!
For it sounds like the yell of a howitzer shell
And the charge of a mounted brigade,
Or the curses that swell from the demons in hell,
As their victims are roasted and flayed!"
"Peace, child; 'tis the tread in the flat overhead,
And the voice of the new Irish maid."

"Oh, mother, the wall—see, it threatens to fall!
It shakes like the leaf ere 'tis shed!
And the floors—how they sway! 'Tis the wrath of Pelée—A blast from the Isle of the Dead!
"Tis the great Judgment Day—so, be near me, I pray,
For the ceiling comes down on my head!"
"Peace, child; they but move in the flat up above,
And let down their new folding-bed."

"Oh, mother! that wail, like a ghost in the gale—A ghost that is famished and blind!

How it keens and it cries! How it shivers and dies
And gabbles and shrieks in the wind!

'Tis the banshee that cries, and I fear my demise——'
But the mother had leaped like a hind,
For that janitor's call to the tube in the hall,
It behooved her most humbly to mind!

CHARLES BUXTON GOING.

HERCULES TO OMPHALE

THEY laugh at me when at thy feet,
Thy fragile distaff in my hand,
I listen to thy soft command,
And ply thy woman's trade—oh, sweet!
Poor fools! they do not understand
That love alone makes life complete.

They sneer because the lion's dress
Across thy marble shoulder lies,
And that thy hand strays in surprise
Upon my war-club's heaviness.
They laugh and cry: "Ambition dies
In wanton days of idleness!"

They do not guess the keener bliss,
Thy spoil and creature thus to be;
The distaff, with its wool, they see,
But not the hand that gave me this;
They see the conquered soul of me,
But know not thy consuming kiss.

Then let them laugh, revile and blame—
Omphale, bend a little near.
If I but feel thy presence, dear,
I am more happy in my shame
Than when, with clarion sounding clear,
They call me in the house of Fame!

ETHEL WATTS MUMFORD.



RINGING THE CHANGES

MRS. LAKESYDE—What is the first step toward getting a divorce?

MRS. MANYWED—The engagement ring!



MRS. STYLE—I want a hat, but it must be the latest style.

Shopman—Kindly take a chair, madame, and wait for a few minutes; the fashion is just changing.

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E DITORIAL NOTICE (in magazine of the near future)—Owing to the press of advertising matter, the literary features have been omitted for this month.

THE CREDIT SIDE

By Owen Oliver

HAVE always wanted father to keep accounts, but he says there is no need, because his expenditure balances his receipts exactly. He is a great author and very clever, but he is not good at business. So, I did not bother him about it; but I made up my mind to have a book for the housekeeping money. I have kept house for father and the boys since mother died. I was ten then, now I am thirteen.

When I began the account, I kept it like this:

June 1. Received 5 o June 1. Spent 5 o June 2. " 7 6 June 2. " 7 6

It was an easy way, but father said it was not scientific. So, I borrowed a big book from the public library to learn how to make it as hard as it ought to be. It was called, "An Elementary Treatise on Bookkeeping by Double Entry." I think it was a very clever book, because it was 724 pages, and I could not understand it at all. I was studying it one afternoon when Jane bounced in. Jane is our "general." She is not a bad girl, but she requires looking after. All servants do.

"There's a hold gent wants to see the marster," she told me.

"Do you think father would want to see him?" I asked.

"No." She grinned.

"Tell him he's out."
"Tole 'im."

"And we don't know when he'll be in." This was true. I knew, but Iane did not.

"Tole 'im."

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I looked at her. "What has he come about?"

"Dunno."

"Does he look like a bill?"

She nodded. "If 'e ain't the new water-rate."

"Ah!" I said. Bills and rates are our greatest trouble; except the rent and taxes and the money father borrowed. "Didn't you tell him to call again?"

"In course I did."

"What did he say?"

"Rather wait, now 'e'd got 'ere."

I sighed. It is very trying when people are so obstinate.

"You had better ask him in here," I said. It is best to be civil, I think;

and I am sure it is nicest!

He was a very short old gentleman in a very long frock-coat; and he had a white beard and spectacles. He was much more pleasant than the rates and bills generally are, and he spoke better. His name was Mac-Bean, he told me, and he had known father for some years.

"Oh!" I said. "Please sit down. He will be glad to see you, of course. I did not know you were a friend of father's."

"I do not know that I am entitled to presume that," he said. He had a slow, quiet way of speaking. "But I shall be glad to see him."

"Have you met him lately?"

"No-o, not very lately. But we have had correspondence, a deal of correspondence." He stroked his beard.

"You are not an editor, I hope?"

"Dear me, no!" he said; "certainly not!"

"I beg your pardon," I said; "I ought to have known better." I did not wish to offend him.

"You do not care for editors?"

I shook my head. "Some editors are better than others; but none of them is really good."
"No?" He seemed surprised.

"They don't even read some of the tales that father sends them," I explained.

"How do you know?"

"Because they send them back!"

"Ah!" he said. "Umph! I see, I see. But they take some of them, don't they?"

"Oh, yes!"

"They are the good ones, I sup-

I drew myself up. "Father's tales are all good."

"Of course, of course. I meant the editors."

I shook my head. "They are not good, really. They don't pay him nearly as much as they ought to."

"I don't care much for editors and such people, myself," he told me. "Sometimes, I am in the papers. They do not say nice things of me.

"It's no use taking any notice of critics," I consoled him. "Father never does—not if he is ever so cross with them."

"Surely, your father does not suffer from them?"

"He does. There was his story in the Weekly Wanderer-'The Moneymaker' it was called. I expect you read it?"

"An excellent work!"

"Well, they actually wrote that he did not understand financial matters!"

"Dear, dear!" Mr. MacBean held up his hands. "I don't think they ever said that about me. But they are malignant persons."

I came to the conclusion that he, too, was an author. "Do you appear under your own name?" I

"No-o," he said. "It is not always

advisable."

"Father has several names. You see, he sometimes appears twice in

one number. It would never do to let people know it was the same person.

"That is exactly my case." He smiled. "I, too, have several names."

I was sure then that he was an author. So, I rang the bell, and told Jane to bring some tea.

"I am sorry to give you so much

trouble," he said, politely.

I assured him that it was no trouble at all. "I am always good friends with father's friends," I explained. "That is, if they will be friends with me."

"Certainly, my dear, certainly." He got up and walked about. "Yes,

yes! I hope so."

Then, he asked me a lot of questions, and I told him how old I was; and how I kept house for them; and how good father was; and how nice the boys were. They are naughty, sometimes, of course, but that is only natural in boys; and I do not tell other people about them.

"You must be a very clever little

girl," he said.

I could not help smiling, because I was taller than he; and I am not clever at all.

"Oh, no!" I said; "I am not. I do not think I shall ever be able to write books; and, sometimes, I cannot understand them." I nodded at the treatise, and he took it up and looked at it.

"You have been trying to understand this?"

"Ye-es. I thought it would show me how to keep accounts. I am afraid it is not the right kind, though. It is about a man named Jones; and he deals in sugar and tea. We don't, you see."

"True," he agreed; "true! Still,

the principles are the same.'

"I suppose they are," I said, doubtfully. "But I haven't noticed them." I was not sure what principles were, really; but I knew they were something to do with interest.

"Let me explain some of them." He folded his hands. "The first thing to remember is that every

transaction has two sides—a debtor and a creditor."

"That's what makes it so puzzling. I can never make up my mind which I prefer." He laughed out loud. I thought it was rather rude of him.

"I know I am stupid."

"Not at all," he said, hastily; "not at all; but it isn't exactly a matter of preference. For example—" He lifted up his cup—"I am debtor to you for this excellent tea!" I gave him some of the best that I get for father. It is one and eleven, and you get a glass milk-pot with every three pounds. "You can't make the transaction a credit to me or a debit to you."

"Oh, yes, I can! I have the pleasure of giving it to you, don't you see?"

He looked at me for a few moments, and played on the table with his

fingers. Then, he sighed.

"I had a little girl of my own once," he told me. "She was not quite so old as you when . . . Ah" He went and looked out of the window.

I did not say anything till he came back. Then, I filled up his cup again.

"I wish sometimes," I said, "that I were clever—when I want to say something, and can't think how to say it. I mean it, just the same, you know."

He put his hand on mine for a moment. "My dear, I know—well, well!" He wiped his spectacles, and put them straight. "Now, to our bookkeeping. To begin at the beginning, you start with an account of your capital."

"But we don't!" You see, we hadn't any capital. That was the

difficulty.

"Umph!" He looked at the book again, and shut it up. "Of course, that makes a difference. Still, there are some things that apply in all cases. For instance, there is discount."

"We never get any."

He shook his finger at me. "You ought to insist on a discount, whenever you pay cash."

"They don't insist on cash," I explained, "the people that we deal with."

He frowned at me over his spectacles. "I am not sure that that does not simplify matters, really," he admitted. "You save one account in your bookkeeping."

"Ye-es; only, you want another for —owings. They don't seem to have

that."

He turned over the leaves, and shut up the book with a bang. "It is not a satisfactory book," he said. "You must have an account for owings. At least, I want one."

I clasped my hands. "I am so sorry," I sympathized; "particular-

ly, if it is a large one."

"It is." He shook his head. I could not make out whether he was smiling and trying not to, or trying not to and smiling.

"I think all nice people have debts," I remarked. "It doesn't matter, really, so long as they don't worry about payment."

"That is just what they do."

I sighed. "Yes; especially people who lend. There isn't anything about an Incorporated Advance Society in your account, I hope?"

"I am afraid there is a great deal."

He shook his head again.

"That is very bad! They make such a fuss, especially when people don't pay the interest."

"I have had a deal of trouble on that account." He spoke so feelingly that I felt sorrier than ever for him.

"They charge such a lot for in-

terest."

"It seems a great deal; but they run a great risk, you see."

"I suppose they do."

"I am glad you recognize that."
"We ought to be just to them.
Father says so—sometimes."

"Not always?"

"Sometimes, he calls them pirates!"
He looked grieved. "I should not like to use such a strong term."

"No-o; but it would be nicer if they

didn't, don't you think?"

"Didn't what?"

"Charge interest."

He smiled, or tried not to smile, again. "Much nicer—for those who borrow."

"I don't care about the people who lend. They have plenty of money,

and don't want any more."

"They think they do," he explained. "It may be unreasonable of them; but we all have our fancies." I thought it was very nice of him to make excuses for them.

"It is unreasonable," I said. "If they have more money than they want, they ought to be glad to lend it to

those who don't."

"Ah!" he said; "umph! It has never occurred to me to regard it in

that way."

He stared at the floor for such a long time that I was afraid he was thinking of his little girl, or else the account of the "owings." So, I asked him to come down in the garden. Father and I take a lot of pains over the garden, and it was very nice just then. He said it was very creditable to us; and I gave him two roses, and pinned them in his buttonhole.

"It is a long time," he told me, "since any one gave me flowers. They were fond of flowers; my wife—and

she." He meant his little girl.

He walked into a bush, and nearly knocked his spectacles off; so he had to wipe them again. I pretended not to notice; but it made me feel uncomfortable, and I was glad that Bob and Tommy came rushing in after school.

"Molly!" Bob shouted; "Molly! We want fourpence to buy fishing-rods. Fred Norrington is going to catch tiddlers in their ponds, and he says we can go." Mr. Norrington is a farmer. It is better than being an author, I think.

"An' if you give us sixpence," Tommy said, "we can get some sweets, too, an' play we're wild Indians!"

"Oh, boys!" I said. "I can't, really. You had a penny each yesterday, and your allowances on Monday. I can't spare any more."

Bob looked sulky, and Tommy be-

gan to cry. He is only eight, and does not know any better.

"We can't ever have anything," Bob

grumbled.

"Why can't we?" said Tommy.

"You might!"

I was so sorry for them. You see, they are little, and do not understand anything about money, except spending it. But I had only one and seven, and the mangling would be one and three when it came home.

"I'll give you a penny each," I offered. "I ought not to, but— No, no! I can't give you any more. Don't

ask me; there's good boys."

"We can't go fishing, if you don't,"

Bob said.

"Do, Molly," Tommy begged;

"please!"

He looked such a dear little fellow, with his big, blue eyes; and I felt the tears come in mine. I was hesitating

when Mr. MacBean came up.

"So these are your brothers?" he said. "What are your names, young men? Bob and Tommy, eh? Very good names, too. Umph! So; you want to go fishing? Quite right, quite right! I'm a bit of a fisherman, myself. See what I can fish out of my pocket." He put in his hand, and pulled out two shillings. "Silver fish!"

"You mustn't, really," I told him; "they have such a lot of money." They looked at me, reproachfully. "Not a lot, perhaps; but still——"

"No doubt," he said; "no doubt; boys shouldn't have much money. It encourages extravagance." He frowned at them over his spectacles, and they looked as if they were going to cry. "But this is a special case; I belong to the Society for the Encouragement of Fishing, so I am bound to help them." He gave them the shillings. "Off you go!" And they thanked him, and raced away.

I was glad for them to have the money, of course; but I was sorry for him to give it. "It is so kind of you," I told him; "but there is your account to think of, you know—the 'owings'!"

"Ah, yes!" he said; "the owings. I must think about them very seri-

ously." But he only smiled. "Well, my dear, I must be going now."

"Father will be sorry to have missed you. I will tell him that you called."

"No, no! you mustn't do that. The fact is, I want to surprise him. If you don't mind saying nothing till he hears from me—I shall write to-night."

So, I promised not to mention it.

"I am very pleased to have met you," he told me, when he said goodbye at the gate. "And, as to the bookkeeping, I've thought of a curious little account that may interest you. I shall send it to-night. Good-bye."

"Thank you, so much," I said.

"Good-bye; and do come again."

Then he went, and I ran in to get father's tea.

"He wasn't bills at all," I informed Jane, "only an author."

"Come to think of it," she said, "he didn't look quite respectable."

Father seemed worried when he came in; so, when the boys had gone to bed, I went and sat beside him.

"What's the matter, daddy?"

He put his arm around me. "It's that money—that I borrowed."

"The Incorporated Advance Society?"

He nodded. "It's mounted up so, with the interest."

"It's shameful to charge so much."

"I could pay it, in time, of course; but they insist on an immediate settlement, and I don't see how it's to be done. I wrote to them last night. I'm afraid—" He looked at the clock. "The postman seems late."

I went and peeped through the blinds. "I can see his lamp—he's coming up the path."

I ran to the door, and brought in the letter. It had "I. A. S." on the back, so I knew it was from them, and would not look at father while he read it, till he gave a cry of astonishment.

"Good heavens! I—I can't make it out at all. Look here, Molly!"

I went and looked. There was the paper that father had signed, with a great, red stamp across it:

CANCELED INCORPORATED ADVANCE SOCIETY

Also, there was an account like this:

Dr.	£. s. d.	Cr.	£. s. d.
1 July 1899 advance		1 Oct. 1899 -	
	f hand. 45. 0.0	Interest paid	2.10.0
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"There's some mistake," father said; "unless—what do you know about it?"

Then, I told him about our visitor; and he said that Mr. MacBean was the Society; and this must be the example of bookkeeping that he promised me.

"Ye-es," I said; "but I don't understand it. The roses weren't worth sixty pounds; and there's only one entry, and there ought to be two, always."

"The other entry," said father, "is in his account—on the credit side!"

That shows the treatise must be all wrong, because there are two credits, and no debit at all!



HIS IDEA OF IT

SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER—Reginald, can you repeat the shortest commandment? It has but four words.

REGINALD—Keep off the grass!

TO A PRETTY VIOLINIST

DEAR Lady, in my dreams last night, Once more, I seemed to hear Hungarian dances, gay and light, The Swan-song, faint and clear.

Once more, I lingered willingly Where Suwanee river flows; Again, I caught the melody Of Summer's last fair rose.

Oh, would I were a violin,
To be entreated so!
And, surely, it would be no sin
To wish myself your beau!

HENRY CLEVELAND WOOD.



A LITTLE LOVE STORY

A DREAMER and a man of action loved a woman.

The dreamer said: "I shall write verses in her praise; they will touch

The dreamer said: "I shall write verses in her praise; they will touch her vanity, and she will love me for them."

But the man of action said: "How old-fashioned! I shall corner the stock-

market, and that will bring her."

So, the dreamer wrote verses, and he induced a friend of his, who ran a ten-cent magazine, to print them. And the man of action cornered something or other, and became a billionaire.

In the meantime, the girl married a man who inherited his money, and

they lived happy ever after.

But the dreamer was so proud of his verses that he didn't care; and the man of action was so busy that he didn't care.

The only one to suffer was the man she married.

L. H. F.

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INSINUATING

MADGE—She has a lovely complexion.

MARJORIE—No wonder; that girl studied chemistry.

5:5:0

NEVER leave the house with unkind words on your lips—say 'em'!

THE MAGIC FLUTE

By Bliss Carman

EAR, O Syrinx, thou lost Dryad! Marsyas, thou mortal, hear! If to lovely and free spirits it is granted to draw near And revisit the old earth from some far-off and twilight sphere,

Like the limpid star of evening hanging o'er the dark hill brow, Globed in light to touch this valley where a worshiper I bow, Oh, give heed, and of your wisdom help a mortal lover now!

Lend him, novice at your flute-work, learner of the magic cry, Something, howsoever faulty, of that cunning ecstasy, The inevitable cadence where the raptures pause and die,

You could marshal at your bidding from the wind-blown river reeds—Mark to rhythm, and mold to beauty, plastic for perfection's needs—Skill to give the spirit lodgment where the longing fancy leads!

Souls of lovers lost in music! You who were beloved of Pan, Piping madness through the meadow where the silver river ran; You who, favored of Athene, found her careless gift to man—

Oh, stray hither, and, recalling some such earth-born, golden hour, When the thrushes eased their sorrow, and the laurel was in flower, Give this last, lost child of nature one least pittance of your power!

So he shall be well accounted Love's own minstrel first and best, By another shy, wild Syrinx, when he puts the gift to test, For a single day immortal—and the gods make good the rest!

Hear, sweetheart, the lonely thrushes! Pure and vibrant up the clove, From the dark, moon-haunted hemlocks and the spacious, dim beech grove, Pierced by Love's own silver planet with a path for us to rove,

Comes the rapture, clear, unsullied, undistracted, undismayed— Heart of earth that still remembers how her strength and joy were made, When the breath of life was given, and the touch of doom was stayed—

The great joyance of creation, welling through the world once more; Love in power and pride and passion, crying still at Beauty's door; Soul made sentient in music to contemplate and adore.

Once . . . O little girl, lift up that dear, wild, woodland, Syrinx face To your lover's who so loves you, gladdening all this leafy place, Where as music merged in moonshine, sense and spirit interlace!

In the first of time was Hathor, the Egyptian Ashtoreth, She who bore the mighty Sun, and quickened nature with her breath, Rocked the cradle of the Nile, and gave men life and gave them death. Once, to share her mysteries, when earth grew green with Springs, there came To her temple in Bubastis, needy and unknown to fame, A young herdsman, golden-haired and tall, Argalioth by name.

And his undeflowered beauty, fair as lotus, slim as palm, With his voice like sweet hill-water, sounding in the choric psalm, Touched the mighty heart there brooding in inviolable calm.

And a sigh as of the wind rose; and the song was hushed; the veil Of the shrine, which none might enter, moved and shimmered like a sail, Or the golden boreal lights that hang across our Northern trail;

In astonishment, the dancers halted. Then the voice said, "Peace! Let my son Argalioth come near. It is a gift of peace." Henceforth only truth and goodness, finding virtue, shall find peace."

Then the lad arose, and went behind the veil; and all was still. Slowly, as from out all distance, rising far and fine and shrill, Came a flute-note, strong as sea-wind, clear as morning on the hill;

Grew and gained and swelled and triumphed, lingering from tone to tone, Golden deep to silver treble, pure and passionate and lone, Marking time to things eternal, touching bounds of spirit's zone,

Filling all the space between with all the wonder and despair, Reach and compass and fulfilment, souls could ever dream or dare, Of the bliss beyond all telling, when the wild sense grows aware.

Then, before those spellbound watchers, from the holy place returned The youth, girt in scarlet linen, with a countenance where burned The great glory of his vision and the secret he had learned;

In his hand, a yellow flute-reed, bound with seven silver bands; From brown foot to red-gold hair a figure that might haunt all lands With distraction and enthralment, while this earth in beauty stands.

Not a word he spoke; serenely trod the marble to the door, Set the flute to mouth, and piping strains no ear had heard before, Passed out through the golden weather, and no man beheld him more.

Yet, there lingered, ah, what music! Not a listener in that throng, Through the years which came upon him, but, at times, would hear the long, Piercing and melodious cadence, Summer-sweet and Autumn-strong,

Heard so long ago, and always, as if musing, he would say, "It is Hathor's magic pipe. In some blue valley far away, By a well among the palms, the wanderer has paused to play!"

For through all the earth he wandered with his magic pipe; and none Heard that piping, but they straightway knew that their old life was done, And the glamour was upon them, prudence lost and freedom won.

He it was who touched with madness, soft, sweet madness of the Spring, The green-throated frogs, whose chorus makes the grassy meadows ring, And the birds who come with April, and must break their heart or sing; Touched his fellow mortals even with a madness of the mind, Till they too must rise and follow, leaving sober tasks behind, While a thing called love possessed them with a craving sweet and blind;

And they knew no fear thereafter, save the one supreme despair— Having loved to lose the loved one, the one little friend could share The vast loneliness of being. What mute bitterness were there!

Thus we all are Hathor's children, brothers of the frogs and birds, Who have listened once forever to the pipe, whose magic words None can fathom, though we follow dumbly as the flocks and herds.

Thenceforth, howsoe'er we wander, all our care is but to know Truth, the sorceress, whose spell of beauty can entrance us so, As it was with ancient lovers in their wisdom long ago.

And, to all men, once a lifetime comes that music of the Hill, Pleading for the life's perfection, the deliverance of will, Beauty's issue from debasement, good's preferment over ill.

Many hear it not, or, hearing, turn with heedless hearts away, Or their soul is deaf with greed or lust or anger or dismay, And the precious, fateful moment passes. But the wise are they

Who preserve without disquiet the serene and open mind, The impassioned poise of spirit, lodged in senses more refined Than the quaking aspen breathed on by the unseen, secret wind.

So, in spite of tears and turmoil, many a radiant hour they know, Hearing o'er the roofs of men the far-off magic woodpipes blow, With a message for the morrow from the ages long ago.

And that message? What I cherish most, this sweet, white night of June, When from sheath of fragrant lace-work slips one shoulder, like the moon From the pine-tops with a luster such as made its lover swoon

Once on Latmos, when your hair falls, like a vine the stars peep through, When I kiss your heart out, much as mighty Pan the reed-pith drew, And your breath, in one "Beloved," answers like the reed he blew;

What I prize most and most treasure is this knowledge great and sure: He who knows love, knows the secret; he who has love has the lure Of the strain whereto this earth was molded well and must endure.

Hush, ah, hush! Lie still! The music is not yet gone from the firs, Haply here the Ancient Mother, in this solitude of hers, Where the mighty veil of silence, leaves and stars, the hill-wind stirs,

Some new larger revelation would vouchsafe to you and me Of the sorceries of Summer, or the secret of the sea, Whose sheer beauty shall enthrall us while its truth shall set us free.

Oh, my tender Syrinx, surely we have heard the magic flute; Whose dark, wild, mysterious transport in a moment can transmute All the heart and life forever, making spirits that were mute Musical and glad! And we have listened to that lost flute-strain, Whose long, sweet and sobbing minor is the record of the rain—Whose proud cry is but the gladness when the Spring comes back again.

Hark, the thrushes at their fluting! The old wizardry and stress Of entrancement are upon them. Wise ones of the wilderness, Who can say but they have burdens of a joy beyond our guess?

Long since did the magic minstrel take them silent from the bough In his hands, and with the secret breath of life their throats endow, As the rose-red mouth of beauty burning me-ward I do now!

~00m

ANSWERS TO ANXIOUS INQUIRERS

SALLY SAYLES—The only infallible preventive of seasickness is hanging.

BIRDIE—If you desire an especially light mattress, buy one that is stuffed with blond hair.

SMALL—After calling a large man a liar, it is well to run, and still better to start in time. You should never be rude to any one who is not paid to stand it.

INQUIRER—Robinson Crusoe's forty-third birthday fell on Friday. However, in spite of Friday's proverbial ill-luck, the faithful fellow was not seriously injured.

Housewife—A cheap floor stain may be made by combining a baby and a bottle of indelible ink; also, baby stain. Remove cork, place in juxtaposition to, and leave opportunity to apply.

Dubb—Do not be cast down because you do not possess a striking personality. There are always others. Some men are born inconsequential, some achieve inconsequence, and others become candidates on the Prohibition ticket.

Judy—You can concoct a punch that will delight your gentleman visitors by mixing the ingredients in equal quantities—one-half whiskey, and the other half whiskey and water. Sweeten to the taste, and flavor with a few dashes of whiskey. Serve liberally.

Phwisk—If your friends are correct in their diagnosis that your side-whiskers make you look like Emperor Franz Josef of Austria, you can either cut them off by telling them to attend to their own business, or you can send your photograph to the Emperor, with a request that he have the court gardener rearrange his foliage.

KNOBB—There is at present no infallible remedy for removing a wart from a nose. The only one there ever was, I once gave to an anxious inquirer, who wrote me ten days later that his nose was completely gone, but the wart was still there. That was a pretty good joke, wasn't it? If it were not for the little sunbursts of humor that illumine my pathway now and then, I'd be driven from this business by nervous prostration. But, every once in a while, something happens to break the monotony. For instance, about a year ago, I wrote a recipe for thin hair and another for the proper bringing up of stuttering children; and, after they were put in type, they became "pied," and a careless and prayerless printer set them up all in one item, according to his lights. The result was something that makes me wake up in the night, even yet, laughing at the thought of any of my friends trying it on either thin hair or stuttering children.

Tom P. Morgan.

INSTRUCTRESS OF MEN

By Elia W. Peattie

ADAME ADAMS dominated Morristown. She was the potentate—and the boast—of that arrogant and complacently provincial village.

Her dinners, her fêtes, her anniversaries, furnished the standard of elegance and of formality for a community, which, but for this imposing example, might have been simple, merely sociable, and unconsciously democratic. She was an autocratic patron of the church—the church being, of course, the Anglican—the founder of the young ladies' seminary which crowned the modest western hill beyond the town, and the owner of much more than her share of good town properties. As the feudal lady looked after manors, fiefs and vassals, this chatelaine of the modern time looked after her shares in surface transportation, in the water-works system, the village bonds, the several business blocks and the rows of sanitary cottages. Nor did her interest end with material things. She was the friend of the health department; she had a civic interest, and she was the most obliging of neighbors. Nevertheless, she was not democratic. She expected all persons to approach her with respect, and, when she was most kind, she revealed a hint of patronage.

From time to time, Madame Adams had relieved the elegant solitude of her domicile by the introduction into it of a charming protégée. First, her sister's child had come to live with her, had been married in her house, and had gone her way. There had followed the reign of two vivacious

Canadians, sisters, and the daughters of a deceased school friend. One had gone to her grave, the other to her bridal.

A pale, French girl, the child of some melancholy and mysterious tragedy, had then found shelter with this benevolent patroness. It was said that Madame Adams had not known her, but had heard of her sad story, and offered her hospitality as one gentlewoman to another. Eventually, this girl had gone to a convent.

Then came a commonplace, merry, freckled grandniece, who skated and flirted and danced, and who ran away, finally—and no harm meant—with a genial, bright and quite plebeian son of a school principal. This offended Madame Adams deeply, and, for several years, she lived alone. Then, quite ceremoniously, she announced to all callers that she was presently to receive under her roof Miss Dangerfield, of Maryland, a kinswoman. She did not confide to her listeners the precise relationship of Miss Dangerfield, though not a little curiosity was felt upon that point. It had not been known that Madame Adams had Southern relatives.

Miss Dangerfield arrived at midnight, and was taken out to The Aspens in a driving rain. For three days, the roads were soaked, and even the most neighborly or curious refrained from venturing along the two-mile drive that led, through groves and meadows, to Madame Adams's home. Then, before they were able to demonstrate their sociability, cards came for a garden fête. The old patroness was bent, evidently, upon

introducing her protégée to her neigh-

bors in a proper manner.

"I wonder how long before we'll be invited to another wedding at The Aspens," said the ladies. They had faith in the generalship of Madame Adams, and they looked, with mingled apprehension and expectation, at their sons.

Morristown was not, fortunately, bereft of men. It was in the midst of a magnificent agricultural country; it was in itself enterprising. Three railroads ran through it; its elevators were several, its mercantile activities considerable, its manufacturing interest steadily growing. Young men were establishing homes and families. There was an increasing pride in its educational facilities. So, naturally, there being plenty for ambitious men to do, the men were there. Mothers had no need to be anxious about the future of their daughters, and the advent of a new girl awakened no feelings of envy. Indeed, the effete sins, venial or otherwise, were not common in Morristown. It was a cheerful and anticipatory town, very busy and greatly interested in life, and its feeling of awe and of confidence in Madame Adams was tempered with some affectionate amusement.

The gardens at The Aspens were exquisite in September. The trees, from which the place took its name, were already turned to a brilliant canary. The maples were as imposing as cardinals; the vines hung heavy with purple and red grapes; and all the arcades and vistas were mellowed by a palpitating violet atmosphere. A tender enchantment hung over the place, and there was about it all the poignant beauty of a charm that is soon to pass. Even in the fall of the water in the fountains. there was the hint of a threnody. In several thickets, musicians played on stringed instruments. Marquee tents stood on the lawns, and in these were served the refreshments. There was a group of tiny Japanese jugglers on a flat sward; a fortune-teller wandered among the guests. It was all diverting, and characteristic of the hostess.

And there was Miss Dangerfield, who, unlike the previous recipients of Madame Adams's frustrated maternal instincts, could not be described or understood.

She was at least thirty years of age—which was surprising. She bore evidences, in manner and apparel, of being a lady with a fat purse—which put her out of the rôle of protégée. She was not beautiful; yet, in her presence, no one looked at, or thought of, any one else. She was as haughty as Madame Adams herself, and much more subtle, and there was an oldworld flavor about her.

"She might be the morganatic wife of

a Russian duke," said one.

"Or a political refugee," said another.

But she gave herself out as an American who had lived much in Maryland, some time in New York, more in Paris, and who was very much gratified to be with her kinswoman in so beautiful and peaceful a spot as The Aspens.

"They tell me that Winter comes here as well as to other places in the world," she said to Dick Deland, handsomest and most debonair of the guests, as he stood before her, "but I can hardly imagine it. For three days, I saw the place through a curtain of little crystal beads—while the rain lasted. It was utterly bewitching, especially for me, who had been seeing only the city for a long time. And, today, the gardens are beautiful enough for a princess to live in."

"You needn't be afraid of the Winter," said Dick. "Even then, it's the most beautiful place imaginable."

Dick was rather surprised at the general attractiveness of his remark. Proper phrases were not, truth to tell, in his line. He was not addicted to niceties, nor to playing the élégant for the delectation of ladies. True, he had had his incipient love episodes with girl neighbors before he went away to college, and his more calloused flirtations while there, and he had returned with the consciousness that he felt blasé. It was a feeling for

which he made no apologies to himself. He looked upon women as trivial incidents in the life of a man; but, along with all this folly, he had some sense. He had come home with the intention of learning the details of business in his father's factory. He meant to be a good son, an excellent business man, and, eventually, a pillar of society. In the meantime, he was diverting himself in his own way, and, for several years past, his diversion had been, as he was pleased to term it, of a "sporty" nature. However, he had condescended to drive out to Madame Adams's tea. It always gave one a feeling of sophistication to call at the Adams manor; and Dick liked a feeling of that sort.

She's thirty," one of the fellows warned him, as he went to receive his presentation to Miss Dangerfield.

"Heaven help us!" said Dick, ab-

sently, and went on.

He always made elaborate court to Madame Adams, for he was still enough of a boy to like this old autocrat to think well of him. To-day, he kissed her fingers, and she presented him, with a great deal of empresse-

ment, to Miss Dangerfield.

The latter looked at him, languidly, out of a pair of blue-green eyes. She extended a long, slender hand for his grasp, and her tall, slight figure, draped in violet, gave the impression of elegance disdained, of the art that concealed art, and of an indolence that masked strength. She said something polite and trifling, in a tone which flattered Dick's self-esteem. She evidently recognized in him a man of experience and of thought. He came to speak with her from time to time, and she asked him his ideas about a number of things. He could not remember that any one had previously solicited his opinion.

"You must tell me who these people are," she said to him once, when he approached her. "That young girl there, with the brown hair and the large eyes—who is she? She looks

very—maidenly."

"That is Miss Nelson," he said;

"Milicent Nelson. She's engaged to be married to Reginald Fadyen. over there, chinning with the fortuneteller. Reggie went up to Yale with me, and we kept together for better or for worse—it was for worse for Reggie—through the whole four years. Reggie's much brighter than I am."

"He's outstripped you—in matters sentiment?" she said, laughing lightly. She put up her lorgnette, and looked at Reggie and his sweetheart.

"They are quite charming," she said, with a little sigh. "Are you envious?"

"Envious?" repeated Dick, blush-

"Of their happiness, I mean." "No," said Dick, stoutly, but with some embarrassment. "I haven't time for that sort of thing, just now."

Miss Dangerfield regarded him, quietly and closely. Dick felt her gaze resting, as it seemed, with a

sort of compassion on him.

"I dare say you will know a great deal more about that sort of thing, some time, than your friend Reggie does," she said. There was a peculiar significance in her words. Dick had not the faintest notion of questioning her astuteness. He was surprised that she should see in his face any indications of emotional depths, but, still, it would be difficult to gainsay any appraisement of hers!

"I hope you are not going to like The Aspens so well that you will turn your back on society," he said, making a tremendous conversational effort, as he came to speak his adieux.

"Does it seem so?" she asked, waving her hand to indicate the groups of guests. "Didn't my hostess practically beg and implore all the town to be good to me?"

But she did not say it quite as if she meant it. There was a light

mockery in her tone.

"I'd like to ask you to be good to "I'd like to ask me," Dick said. you to let me call."

"Afternoon is better than evening, for we are away down this long, dark road. Come and have a cup of tea

with us to-morrow. May not Mr. Deland drink tea with us to-morrow, aunt?"

"Is she really your aunt?" asked Dick, after the engagement had been made.

"I have never been able to discover just how we are related," laughed Miss Dangerfield; "but it doesn't matter. Perhaps, we like each other better for not knowing."

Madame Adams took the young woman's hand in hers, with that excess of deportment which characterized all her acts.

"She calls me aunt," she said, smiling on the departing guests, "but, really, I should like you to consider her as my daughter."

The company looked embarrassed, or interested, sympathetic, or annoyed, at this imposing manner, according to their diverse temperaments; but Miss Dangerfield still smiled with her gentle mockery.

"That is a woman," said Dick Deland, as he drove off, "who could lead a man to hell!" He was very young, and was aroused to his first suspicion of an emotional nature in himself. It was not surprising that he developed a melancholy eloquence. "She has had her experiences, too; one can see that. Perhaps, she has outlived them, or—"

His thoughts became confused. But one thing was definite and clear—he meant to call the following afternoon.

There was a brisk wind blowing, and the palpitant glory of yesterday was dimmed; but Dick took no notice of that as he rode out between the yellowing fields. He had a good mount, and the blood was pounding in his veins. He could not remember when he had felt so interested.

At The Aspens, there was all manner of comfort to be had. A log-fire roared in the library, and the odor of freshly made tea stole, agreeably, through the room. Miss Dangerfield was at the piano when he entered, and she smiled and nodded

and went on with her playing. There were several persons present, and they were all in a mellow mood. That pleasing melancholy which Autumn engenders, had seized upon They sat, dreamily listening to the music, and Miss Dangerfield played with fitful passion, now and then making some comment on the composition, or turning to ask some one's opinion about a phrase. The music stole subtly into Dick's consciousness. He went over to the piano, and leaned upon it. His fellowtownsfolk blushed for him; but Dick was unconscious of anything save the enchantment of this particular woman's presence.

After a time, she arose, and, while Madame Adams served him with tea, Miss Dangerfield talked to him.

"Do you know," she said, "that you have a terrible frown! I'm really sorry for the persons who displease you."

"Frown! When have I frowned?"
"While I was playing to you on

the piano."
"You were not playing to me, but
to a number of persons—to a room-

ful."

"Ah, perhaps that is why you frowned!"

"I didn't know that I frowned. I must have been intensely interested."

"In the music?"

"Well, put it that way, if you like."

"It is interesting enough to demand even your terrible frown, Mr. Deland. For example, that thing I played last—do you know the story of that? It was Chopin's."

She went on to tell him a tale sympathique.

"They call him a master," she cried, when she had finished her pensive anecdote, "but of what was he a master? It was just because he was nothing of the sort that he was so adorable. He continually suggests, perpetually fails to achieve. He is mocked by the splendor of sentiments which are shadowed forth

in his imagination, but which he cannot quite comprehend. All the vital things of life escaped him, because he had to have the spirit, as well as the substance of things; and, in pursuit of the spirit, he lost the substance."

"I have always heard that women like his music above all things," said Dick, forgetting to be self-con-

scious.

"Yes—for they, also, are in pursuit

of the spirit."

She sat a while, looking distraitly before her. Dick observed, with delight, the slender grace of her tall figure, the carriage of her delicate head, the somber lines of her sensitive mouth, the melancholy and passion in her eyes. Her gown of nutbrown crape, glittering here and there with bronze lights, became her perfectly. In her coiled, nut-brown hair was an enormous comb—the largest Dick had ever seen. It would have seemed absurd on the head of another. It sat like a crown on this particular head. Dick, sitting apart in a corner of the room with this woman, began to understand many things—the love of Dante for Beatrice, the madness of Ilium, "in a ships, fighting for one woman on the sea." Suddenly, she made him a gesture of apology, and went back to the other guests. Then, he saw her wandering apart with Mrs. Sessions, an elderly lady with a reputation for esthetic tastes, and he had his own reflections about the waste that occurs now and then in the world.

Presently, every one began to leave, and he, too, had to take his departure. "Good-bye, Sir Knight of the Ter-

wish you were going to stay a while. We would have a conversation on the varieties of human woe. I have discovered several myself, but I am sure you have outdistanced me."

Dick had not known that there was anything the matter with him, but he now began to feel symptoms of a soul malady, and, as he rode

away on his horse—it was, fortunately for the unities, coal black—he flung a melancholy glance at his lady where she stood, pensive and mocking, in the French window.

After that, he called at least three times a week, and the days when he did not see Isabel Dangerfield were mere halts in time—interstices—the nadir of existence.

Miss Dangerfield had become a useful member of Madame Adams's household. The vigorous old autocrat had begun to own to some of the frailties of her years. She required a lieutenant, and she found an efficient, nay, a brilliant one, in her new companion. She wished her house to sustain its reputation for hospitality, but she seldom felt equal to the task of receiving. Miss Danger-field did this for her. She did not wish the young ladies at the seminary, which she had founded, to feel that her interest was departing, yet she was no longer fit for the tasks of presenting diplomas or class gifts, or being present at fêtes. In all these matters, Miss Dangerfield acted as her deputy. There was no question about the ability of Madame Adams's understudy, but a very unobservant person might have noticed a difference in the spirit in which these courtesies, tasks obligations were discharged. Madame Adams had played her rôle without the consciousness that it was a rôle. Heart and soul, she had lived her curious, influential, important and occasionally absurd life. Miss Dangerfield was troubled with a sense of humor. Her lips looked caustic, though they spoke only courtesies. Every situation appeared to have its lurking absurdity for her.

Even when poor Dick, who had become confirmed in his appetite for her smiles, declared himself, and offered her his very substantial fortune and his adoring service as long as he should live, she smiled. It was half in compassion, which made Dick cold with rage.

"I'm almost ten years your senior, Dick, dear," she said. "It would

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never do. People would call me, with some reason, an adventuress."

"You led me on," cried Dick, at white heat; "you enchanted me! You seemed to prefer me to every one. And you yourself know that I have come to see the whole world through your eyes. You've made a different man of me. I've lost my old ways, and neglected my old friends. I belong to you—the man I am now is your work. You can't cast your own work off."

"Why, Dickie," she said, with gentle reproach, "I merely helped you to find your own soul!"

"My own hell!" groaned Dick, and dragged himself away, to walk the

streets the night through.

But that very morning, staggering homeward, he beheld the face of a young girl, looking at him, as would an angel through sulphurous flames. She was leading two little children by the hand, and her face, almost as infantile as theirs, smiled at Dicksmiled at everything—with the insouciance of a violet awakening to the miracle of life. Dick gasped. This innocence and good faith seemed like cold water held to his lips. As he lay at home, writhing in his torment, again and again the face came to assure him that not all women were subtle; not all women were complex. had not learned to mock at life.

Once again, he met her, and this time he followed her—as a man follows truth. He performed a trifling service for her, and she thanked him, abundantly. It was an easy matter to have speech with her. She had no guile, and suspected none. The next time he met her on the street, he saluted. A week later, he was walking, when they met by chance. After a time, he called. She was poor-but she was glorious. Nature herself, in April, could be no more revivifying. The dammed torrent of his love, the arrested eloquence, the frustrated dreams, were released again. adored her, partly because she was what the other woman was not. exulted that no man had touched her

lips; he was glad of her ignorance. She could teach him nothing-at least, so he then thought. But she could love him. She did-ardently, modestly, with primitive delight. He married her, and marveled at the poetry, the wonder, the perfection of life. He was replete with the power to enjoy. No delicate delight of service, no dear mystery of love, but he felt himself master of it. The very tones of his voice changed when he addressed his exquisite young wife. He served her as a knight serves his lady. He barricaded her with love, and flattered himself that no sorrow could climb over this redoubt, no shame assail it.

And then, one day, on the street, he met Miss Dangerfield. She smiled, quizzically.

"Dick, dear," she said, "you are wondrously happy, they tell me."

"Yes," he said, and noticed the sardonic curve of her thin lips, the green that lurked in the blue of her eyes, the mocking lift of the heavy evebrows.

"Dick," she said, gently—almost in a placating tone—"do you realize that you could never have loved like that if—if it had not been that I

taught you how?"

Dick stared and reddened, and she passed on, swiftly. He gaped after her, and her words sank in. Slowly, he smiled. He had begun to recollect. It was true. It was she who had first hinted to him that true passion lay dormant in him. He had not guessed the presence of emotion in himself till she had pointed it out. The very poetry and joy of life, she had revealed to him!

He turned and walked toward his home, freshly enamoured of existence. It came over him—as truisms do come over the young, overwhelming them with their verity—that experience was valuable. He had heard it said, often, but for the first time it had been demonstrated to him.

In the plenitude of his peace, Deland sometimes wondered, with a certain compassion for his old friend, how she was spending her days. The sun of Madame Adams's life, he knew, was sinking to its imperious close. He pitied Isabel Dangerfield; he fancied she had lonely hours. But he learned one day that Reginald Fadyen was in constant attendance. He had broken his engagement with Milicent Nelson.

"We made each other miserable," he explained to Deland. "It was a tenuous affair. The truth is, we became engaged because there was an epidemic of that sort of thing in our set. Milicent was the first to realize it. She said I was the poorest excuse for a lover she could imagine. And I suppose I was," he admitted, drearily. "But it is over, now, and I wish her well. She's a good girl—too good for me." He sighed. "There's something the matter with me, Deland. I don't know how to love."

"Indeed!" said Deland, rather bitterly. "How do you name your feel-

ing for Miss Dangerfield?"

Fadyen went scarlet. "Dick!" he said, with sharp reproach. "One does not love an—an angel; one merely serves."

"Oh!" said Dick.

"She's in a horrible position. That grievous czarina, out there at The Aspens, has her in chains, and she waits on her, executes her most preposterous commands, devises amusements for her, without a word of complaint. But were she duplicated—or triplicated—she couldn't do all that is required of her. So, I help her out. I run errands for her. I go out to see her in that abominable hermitage. And she's disproportionately grateful, of course. She's that kind."

"Do you manage to get out every

day?" asked Dick, softly.

"Oh, at least once a day," said Fadyen, promptly; "or, if I can't get out—it has happened a few times—I send some little message or token, just to let her know I'm not deserting her at such a time."

A month later, Deland, attending with all the rest of Morristown the obsequies of Madame Adams, saw

Fadyen supporting Isabel Dangerfield. She was desperately pale, and her figure looked taller and slighter than ever, in its black robes. They fell about her as if she were the statue of Woe. Out of hollow eyes, she looked wearily at Dick and his lovely companion. Dick felt a wave of tenderness and compassion flowing out toward her, and he contrived to whisper a few heartfelt condolences. As for Fadyen, Dick could see that he loved to serve her, that she filled the world for him, and that all other creatures were but as moving shadows in his eyes.

It became known that Miss Dangerfield was the sole executor of the Adams estate, and, furthermore, that she came into the greater part of it. It was a trifle mysterious, all things considered, for there were many who had, apparently, been more closely associated with the late Maria Adams than had Miss Dangerfield. But Major Atherton, quite the oldest inhabitant, remembered, and mentioned the fact to the bishop at dinner, that, when he was young, there had been a mysterious chapter in Maria Adams's life. But that was, of course, when she was Maria Edgewood. He could not recollect the details, and Maria had laughed and lived it down—it was her way. Then, she married a rich man, and was gracious to everybody, and it seemed worse than foolish to remember a tale which were best forgotten. Still, it was recalled that she had taken a brief visit each year, unaccompanied by her husband, during all the period of her earlier married life. She had been indefinite about these excursions, and, upon returning, she was ordinarily a little more energetic than before she went away. Could it be, her reminiscing friends wondered, that she occupied herself in order to forget something which it was painful to remem-

It was settled at last, in the mysterious way in which public opinion does settle matters that are none of its business, that Miss Dangerfield might have some excuse for her latent

bitterness; and that, if her motives were not always transparent, it might be partly because fate had not dealt in a straightforward manner with her.

"Maria Adams would hate to think she had done wrong, or made any sort of a blunder," these amateur psychologists declared; "so, at the last, she did what she had previously feared to do, and brought her daughter home. Then, she declared her relationship in her own peculiar way, and eased her conscience. Well, it is a good thing she did!"

Thus the condoning voice of the world spoke. Ancient sins have a mitigating dustiness about them; like many of the works of the old masters, they are made tolerable by their obscurity.

Miss Dangerfield executed faithfully all the desires of Maria Adams, and then she announced that she was going abroad. She looked, indeed, in sad need of change. Some sorrow, only half-spoken, had been gnawing at her, apparently. The day she left, every one commented on her fragility. She was quite tender with poor Fadyen at the last moment.

"Don't talk to me about despair!" she said, sternly. "If you knew everything, you would thank me to the end of your days for not yielding to you. You would look well with a cynical, bitter, middle-aged wife like me, wouldn't you? If I had done as you asked, the day would have come when you would have detested me, or been patient with me—which would have been worse."

"If I could have had a month with you," sobbed Fadyen, "it would have been more to me than years with any other woman. I would not have troubled you. You could have lived any life you liked—known any one you wished, studied, traveled—done whatever you pleased. Now, how do you expect me to live?"

The bells rang; the cars began to move. Fadyen hastened from the train, and saw her leave him—saw her snatched from his vision. Was it mere fancy that, as the train pulled

past him, he beheld a look of wistfulness in her eyes?

He was left in the grip of sorrow. It preyed on him like a slow fever. Deland saw and understood; and, one day, he told Fadyen, quite casually, a story about Milicent Nelson, his old sweetheart.

"She's going with that fool Cooley," he said. "He drinks, but conceals it. He's an ass, anyway, but she's going to marry him, merely because she feels the need of doing something, I suppose."

"Milicent marry that creature!" Fadyen gasped. "What a profana-

tion!"

"What's to be done?" asked Dick. "The only way to save her is to marry her." He said it jestingly. But the other acquainted himself with the true state of things, and, three months later, he came to Deland with a chastened look in his eyes.

"She has forgiven me for everything," he said. "And, Dick, she was in earnest all the time. Who would have thought the little thing was so deep! She released me only through pride; she thought I didn't care for her. I swear I did, as well as I knew how; but somehow, in a mysterious way, I seem only just now to have discovered how sacred and beautiful women are."

They heard of Miss Dangerfield at Nice that year, and some one brought back word that a young, invalided English lord was enamoured of her.

"She is easing his path to the grave," thought Dick, without satire. "She will keep the poor devil diverted to the last, and weep over his tomb. She is a wonderful woman."

In time, he learned that he was correct. Lord Cecil Maitland passed away with his eyes fixed on hers. She had his grave planted with English violets, and she went up into Scotland, so it was rumored.

Two years later, she was back in Morristown. She had been around the world.

"It must have been a wonderful experience," said Dick's little wife,

when her husband took her to call on Isabel; "not alone for the sights you saw, but because of the people you met."

"People!" said Miss Dangerfield, slowly. "Yes, I certainly met a great variety—some of them never

to be forgotten."

Dick looked at her with a quiet scrutiny. Isabel Dangerfield sat musing for a moment; and something in her concentered thought made her as an open book to him. He knew there flashed through her recollection the faces of the men she had met and passed—wanderers, with riches and no home, sailing over alien seas, visiting other men's lands; adventurers, abashed by her adroitness, accused by her discernment, and brought to long for better things by her pervading poetry; boys, virgin to sorrow or to doubt; old men, avid for one more taste of youth; gay men, reproached by her exquisite melancholy; sad men, cheered by her words. On land and sea, on the Bois, on the deck, in lonely spots and crowded thoroughfares, in the glare of the day and the witchery of the moon, she had talked to them. It was her dissipation. To arouse emotion in them, to reveal to them the poetry in their own souls, to mock them with the shadow of love and joy, to instruct them in life—this was her avocation. It was as if a curse rested upon her; she could never hold in her own hands the bowl of life. And yet, perhaps, she once held it, and it had been dashed to earth. At that moment, the most incandescent of Dick's life, he felt that this was a fact, and, as on a previous occasion, compassion swept over him.

"Are you going to stay here with us?" he asked.

"I shall open up the old house," she said. "It is mine now, you know. It is full of ghosts, but I always felt very friendly toward ghosts."

Her minor tones struck on the ear solemnly. Was she posing still?

Dick suspected it, angrily. Then he asked himself if she had ever posed.

"You must come and see our baby," said Mrs. Dick. "He is walking a little bit—just a very little. He took four steps to-day, and he would have walked farther, only he laughed so that he fell over. His laugh is the sweetest thing!"

Miss Dangerfield took Mrs. Dick's hands in hers, and held them a moment. "I haven't a doubt," she said, "that his laugh is the sweetest

thing!"

And Dick felt a lump in his throat.

Isabel Dangerfield had settled at The Aspens, but she did not, at first, open its doors, in accordance with the old traditions. The gardens, once the pride of Morristown, suffered some neglect. The drawing-room was not opened. She lived chiefly in a sitting-room on the second floor, and opening off this were two apartments, one a bare bedroom, the other an oratory. She went in bitter Winter dawns to early service at the beautiful chapel that Madame Adams had built, and she caused to be placed in it an exquisite memorial window in honor of the foundress. She embroidered altar-cloths; she observed the fast days. She even read religious works, and she informed herself carefully as to the days and observances of the church. There was an excess in all this, as every one perceived. The whole episode appeared artificial. Her restless eyes held a sort of fever in them; Deland guessed that she had looked in her mirror to her own undoing. She had perceived the decay of her peculiar charms, and, perhaps, her once eagerly followed pursuit of subjugating men had actually ceased to interest her. But that might be because she could no longer count upon conquest. She was evidently search of a compensation, and no one was surprised when, by her actions, she made a practical admission that she had failed to find it in her affected piety.

She began a new departure by the giving of a very charming dinner, at which she appeared, for the first time since Madame Adams's death, in colors. Moreover, she wore the pearls which, on the more expansive bosom of her predecessor, had long been familiar. The act was not in good taste, and it gave Dick a twinge of curiosity. Providing that Madame Adams was responsible for the existence of Isabel Dangerfield, what was the missing quantity? It opened upon a curious line of thought.

At any rate, this high priestess of the emotions appeared to find present contentment in the commonplace. She became sociable. She was visited by the middle-aged, the practical, the commonplace. She, who had once aroused unrest in the souls of those who talked with her, who had continually piqued the imagination, who had suggested love, even when she did not inspire it, began to devote herself to a consideration of material things. She sat longer at table than had been her custom, previously; and her talent lay dormant under fat weeds of prosperity, increasing years and lusty circumstance. She was like a singer who has quitted the stage, and who feigns to find relief in retirement.

She began to acquire flesh, and, owing to her unusual height, was referred to as a large woman. Her memory dimmed a little, and she

could not be sure of her quotations. The minor cadence which had made her voice unforgettable, gave place to a complacent major tone, and she increased tremendously in the cordiality of her manner toward people. Little by little, she assumed the social, civic and educational responsibilities which had been the delight of old Madame Adams's days. sat on platforms at public meetings, entertained visiting strangers of distinction, and she gave out the diplomas at the seminary. She now worshiped at convenient hours, after she had breakfasted and read her And she had a cushion put paper. in her pew at church. Her skirts, which had once been noiseless, and had emitted an odor as faint as that of violets in the dewy grass, were now rustling and important, and she no longer took the trouble to scent them with delicate and evanescent perfumes. She acquired a reputation for executive ability; it was said that she had a turn for business, and her dinners became quite celebrated.

Only now and then, at the sight of a handsome and ingenuous youth, the old subtlety returned to her glance; there was an almost imperceptible expansion of her delicate nostrils; and, about her mouth, there stole a look, half-sensual, half-spiritual. It was the last flicker of her peculiar talent, now all but atrophied—that talent which had made her the Instructress of Men.



TROUBLES OF THE RICH

JAGGLES—What persons are most subject to appendicitis? WAGGLES—Those who are able to pay for an operation.



"I see—a nice bit of property, but unimproved."

PROGRESS

By Albert Lee

ONE evening, when the Robber Chief Had plentifully dined On quantities of roasted beef, With apple-sauce beyond belief And fruits of every kind,

He called his son, a callow lad,
Of years some two-and-twenty,
Of simple mind and visage sad,
Who never wanted to be bad,
But had to—non volente.

"My son," the Robber Chieftain said,
"The time is drawing near
When you will have to go ahead
And try to earn your daily bread,
Likewise your daily beer.

"I have not thought it best for you
To spend four years at college,
Because, for what you wish to do,
No classic courses can imbue
The proper kind of knowledge.

"And so at home you have been kept,
That I might train your mind,
And drill you well in that precept
Which every robber must accept:
'Take everything you find!'

"The time has come, again I say,
To choose your life's career;
Of all the thieving arts, which way
Appeals to you the most to-day?
Which one do you hold dear?"

The Robber's son—the callow lad—Glanced upward with a smirk,
And said he'd only be too glad
To do whatever pleased his dad,
So long as 'twasn't work.

The Chieftain said: "When I began To lead a life of crime, I started as a bunco man, And went along upon that plan For quite a little time.

"I worked the old familiar trick
That's been performed for years—
I used the same old golden brick,
Until it fairly turned me sick,
And drove me nigh to tears.

"I sold great wads of green goods, too,
To rustic innocents;
I ran a lottery, and drew
The prizes for a favored few;
I counterfeited cents.

"And, when on shore I found my health Was suffering from working,
To sea I sailed and gathered wealth,
And hid it on the shore by stealth,
When no one near was lurking."

"But, father," then the youth replied,
"One branch you have not named;
You tell of all the arts you've tried,
You bid me choose now, and decide
From what you have proclaimed;

"Yet why do you omit the best,
The richest of all tricks;
More profit-yielding than the rest,
And one I should embrace with zest—
The trade of politics?"

The Robber opened wide his eyes,
And gazed upon his boy
In proud and eloquent surprise,
Which even he could not disguise,
So fulsome was his joy.

"O son!" his words with fervor burst,
"Go forth now to the village;
Become a District Leader first,
And then stride on from worse to worst,
Until you're fat with pillage!"

And now this gentle robber lad,
Who once was meek and lowly,
Has coin more than his father had,
And is not really reckoned bad—
For people reckon slowly!

WHAT POLLY KNEW

By Sarah Barnwell Elliott

"She dropt as softly as a star From out my Summer's eve."

T was a concert of antique music. The singers had not yet come on the stage, and Polly asked:

"Who is that beautiful man on the right, see? No, you are gazing at the blond man, who looks as if his hair were thatched on—and now at the fat bald-headed man, with neither of them, of course, but beyond, see? Superbly handsome! sitting just behind the Dunstons."

"Reading his programme?"

"No, no! The one now talking to a woman with lots of pale pink on she might be sixty; looks as if the cosmetics were having a family reunion on her face."

"How spiteful you women are! She is barely forty-five, and that man you call handsome is X."

"Truly! Oh, I'm so glad I came! I've fairly longed to know him!"

"Know him! And I am wondering why Mrs. Jennings speaks to him."

"Because he is so beautiful. man as good to look at as that man is, could command my friendship to the foot of the gallows. Has he been so very bad?"

"Outrageous in every way; besides, he has dissipated two fortunes—one for himself and one for his mother."

"That proves that he does not love money, and the Good Book says, 'The love of money is the root of all evil."

"How do you know that?"

"I heard it read in church."

"You astonish me!"

"Yes, in church, long ago, before I learned bridge and golf.

"I see! And your Adonis would T 2 T

have spent his wife's fortune, also, if he had been permitted."

"For a generous soul, Arthur, the soul that loves to spread itself in both word and deed, the only habit more easily acquired than the spending habit is the fibbing habit. Is he generous in putting frills to his facts? Does he fib?

"Of course."

"To men—to women—or to both?" "To all the world; to the angels, if he had a chance."

"You mean me, Arthur?"

"You should not speak to him."

"So? We'll discuss that, later. A man with a nose like that should have excuses made for him. Where did he throw away his two fortunes?"

"His own, here; his mother's, all

over the world."

"Before his marriage?"

"His mother's while he was en-

"Tell me, Arthur, was there not a love-story—a girl in the South?"

"The merest flirtation, his mother told me, and he has had dozens."

"And his mama went South?"

"I believe she did. He was in camp—Spanish war, you know."

"Yes; and his mama went down to

see him."

"We must hush now! By Jove,

Polly, that is good!"

"Reminds me of when I used to go to church—'Miserere Mei Deus'— Adonis has gone quite pale!"

"Hush-h-h--!"

"His eyes are wonderful!"

"Hush-sh-sh-"

"The music has stopped to rest now, Arthur; I must talk. Tell mehis mama stayed in the South, a little while?"

"Really, I do not remember."

"And when he came back from the South with mama, he left his little girl behind him?"

"He must have; I did not see

her.'

"Then he was thrown with Miss Millions?"

"He met her about that time, and then began to make ducks-and-drakes of his money—ran a course that was

shocking."

"Even in Babylon, Arthur? Perhaps, he got no letters from the little girl in the South; perhaps, mama took charge of them. Perhaps, mama had talked to the sensitive little girl? Perhaps, Adonis's wild course meant desperation?"

"Hush-sh-sh---!"

"Some more 'Miserere'? Poor Adonis! it is too much for him; he is going out. What a figure! what shoulders! Won't you stop him, as he comes back, and introduce him?"

"Of course not!"

"'Men are so spiteful!' And, then, did he become engaged to Miss Millions—and then—?"

"Went floundering over the world, leaving her, just as the engagement was announced, and began spending with both hands, his poor mother toddling after him! I was never so

sorry for a woman in my life!"

"Then, he was dragged home and married to Miss Millions? Poor fellow! Here he comes back! You won't introduce him? Too bad! Now, they are going to sing an Easter song—all 'Hallelujahs.' See, Adonis smiles; perhaps, he believes in the Resurrection—in meeting again—."

"Hush-sh-sh-! I thought you

loved music, Polly?"

"'All the world loves a lover.' Poor Adonis!"

"For heaven's sake, tell me, what is this story you are making up!"

"Making up? I wonder if I am

an undiscovered romancer?"

"You annoy me, Polly; why are you so distracted about that man?"

"You do not appreciate his wonderful head."

"I know his wonderful heart! Last Summer, he tried to run away with his neighbor's wife."

"And she was willing?"

"Quite."

"Î don't blame her."

"Polly!"

"Hush-sh-sh—! Arthur, dear, I thought you loved music! Here comes some more singing about sin, and having mercy; think of a concert like this in Babylon! I suppose it is the music, not the words."

"Polly, what ails you?"

"Has no one ever told you, Arthur, that I am a very trying person? Have you never reflected that you may be driven to run away from me some day with your neighbor's wife? or that I might elope with Adonis—is he divorced, by the way? Now, I suppose I must hush again, and you can think of what I have said. Oh, this is lovely! Listen!

" ' Live to thee-die to thee!"

Look at Adonis—his head has drooped!

" 'But with thee abide forever!'

Please look at Adonis!

" 'Where life endeth never!'

That was beautiful—charming! But, when he tried to run away with the other man's wife, was there a divorce?"

"No, his wife forgave him."

"Would not let him off! I cannot blame her. And the husband of the other woman?"

"Knew nothing about it."

"Strange—most strange!"

"Not at all. The husband was away, and they did not actually go; at the last moment, your beautiful Adonis asked the woman to reconsider."

"How mortifying!"

"Adonis is a coward."

"Never!"

"Acknowledged it—said he was afraid."

"Afraid?"

"To try any more matrimony;

don't laugh so, Polly!"

"How delightful! And yet his wife forgave him? Because of his nose, of course, his beautiful nose! Delightful!"

"Polly!"

"Lots of humor in that poor Adonis! Now, some more music."

"I'm surprised that you know the

fact.''

"Don't be sarcastic. I'll listen. A minuet—that was fascinating! I seemed to see all the stately lords and ladies 'stepping a measure.' How handsome a handsome man must have looked in those days! Adonis, for instance, would have been superb! Of course, you wish me to hush once more; and, yet, I'm glad I came."

"I wonder they have not turned

us out."

"I've whispered—have bored only you. My word! that was too antique to be beautiful! And, now, a love song—far more interesting. Again, I look at Adonis—oh, beautiful Adonis!"

"Coward!"

"Because he was afraid of more matrimony? Not at all! Now, Arthur, in this interval—there's a good fellow—tell me, how did he break to the woman that he was afraid of more matrimony, and how did the story get out?"

"She told it to her best friend."

"Best friends make accident poli-

cies a necessity. Go on."

"In the country, last Summer, Adonis was to meet the woman at the station; she got there first——"

"Of course."

"Just as he drove up—had just stepped out of his trap—a boy came tearing after him on horseback. A telegram——"

"From the husband; and——?"

"Nobody knows; but Adonis nearly fainted, he was so frightened."

"Perhaps, it was to tell him that the little Southern girl was dead. Oh, I'm glad he cared so much!"

"Nonsense! Nobody knows whom it was from. I believe it was an ordinary business message; but, coming at that moment, while he had reason to fear interference, it terrified him so dreadfully that he dared go no farther. Adonis said, 'Please re-'Reconsider!' she cried; 'why?' Then.
Adonis faltered 'T Adonis faltered. 'I am—am—afraid of any more matrimony!' And he had to sit down, pale and trembling; the woman, hanging over a bench, also trembled; the telegram trembled in Adonis's hand. 'I've killed her!' he said, slowly. The woman jumped up, furious. 'Not at all!' she cried; 'I never was more alive!' And she made for her carriage. But Adonis —your beautiful Adonis, your brave Adonis—could not move! He sat there, giggling hysterically, and gazing like a blank idiot. The last she saw, the coward was staring!"

"Oh, I am so glad, so glad! He did care—poor little girl! At the Hot Springs, you know, where they had sent her for a broken heart!"

"Polly, you're crazy!"

"This is the last—this German thing:

"' Death, that is the cool night, Life, the sweltering day, It darkens—I sleep me; The day hath wearied me.'

"Poor, poor Adonis! Get your patience ready, Arthur. I shall speak to him—introduce myself. I must; I have a word for him. I know it all. I sent that telegram last Summer. Alas! I was with her when she died, and I'll help him kill his mother! Poor Adonis, poor Adonis! Here he comes. Go on ahead, Arthur. Poor Adonis!"



MARRIAGE is not a failure—only a temporary embarrassment.

THE WEDDING-GOWN

"For her who comes to-night.
Go, find you threads of snowy pride,
And weave it fast and bright;
For never altar knew a bride
Whose soul was half so white."

"I'll weave it of the cloud-wreaths fine That hung in heaven, remote, When first her eyes, drawn unto thine, Thy soul to knighthood smote."

"Clouds are not white enough to twine The whiteness of her throat."

"I'll weave it of the lilies tall,
That listened, set apart,
When, shadowed by the mossy wall,
Thy footsteps made her start."

"They are not white enough to fall Above her maiden heart."

"I'll weave it of the snow-drifts, high Upon the mountain crest, What time she saw thee riding by, And knew she loved thee best."

"They are not white enough to lie Above her maiden breast."

"I'll weave it of the dreams that strayed About her couch last night.
I'll weave it of the prayer she prayed For thee, when dawn grew bright."

"So shall the wedding-gown be made— White as her soul is white."

MABEL EARLE.



THOSE DEAR GIRLS

THE FIRST—When he proposed to me he acted like a regular idiot.

The Second—Well, my dear, you must remember that he was doing something idiotic.

A YEAR'S SCHOOLING

BEING SOME LETTERS FROM MR. A. B. SMITH TO PROFESSOR X. Y. JONES, A.M., PRINCIPAL OF THE TIPTOP PREPARATORY ACADEMY

By Hayden Carruth

OCTOBER 3, 1901.

Y DEAR SIR:
Yours of the 1st, enclosing bill for the tuition of my son at your school for the coming year, is at hand. I have directed my secretary to make payment immediately, and remain,

Very truly yours,

А. В. Ѕмітн.

November 6, 1901.

My dear Professor Jones:

Your letter of the 1st is received. I find, on investigation, much to my chagrin, that you are right in thinking you have not yet received payment of tuition for my son. The matter was bungled by a clerk in my office, who also, I regret to say, stupidly lost your bill. Kindly send another, when the matter shall have prompt attention. Begging your indulgence, I remain,

Very truly yours,

A. B. SMITH.

DECEMBER 10, 1901.

DEAR PROFESSOR JONES:

Yours of the 9th ult. should have had attention sooner. My absence from the city on important business accounts for the delay. I find, on examining your second bill, that it is \$25 in excess of the first. I dare say this is a clerical error, but before receiving my remittance I am sure you would prefer that I have a corrected bill. Awaiting this, and with kindly greetings for the approaching holiday season, I remain,

Yours truly,

A. B. SMITH.

JANUARY 5, 1902. Dear Professor:

Yours of December 12th is received. I beg ten thousand pardons for my stupidity. Of course, your second bill was the same as the first, now that I recall it. I cannot understand why I should have thought otherwise. Please inform me by return mail if you can use a cheque on my local bankers, or if you would prefer a draft. On receipt of this information, the matter will be closed up without delay.

Very truly,
A. B. SMITH.

FEBRUARY 17, 1902.

My Dear Professor Jones:

I find your letter awaiting me on my return from Europe. I cannot understand why you have not been paid, as I left explicit instructions in regard to the matter before sailing. My own absence and the illness of my general manager have, however, somewhat demoralized the office; still, I cannot believe that your cheque was overlooked in the face of my positive orders. I shall institute a rigid investigation, and report to you immediately. My son writes me that he is making rapid progress and enjoying life immensely at your excellent school.

Yours sincerely, A. B. Smith.

MARCH 2, 1902.

DEAR PROFESSOR JONES:

Yours of recent date is at hand. My investigations took more time than I expected, but I am pleased to say that they show that a cheque was sent you

on February 12th. I cannot understand why you have not received in I would suggest that you demand your local postmaster to search his office for it. I doubt not it will be found. I still have glowing reports from my son, and remain,

Yours truly, A. B. Smith.

MARCH 31, 1902.

DEAR PROFESSOR:

I regret exceedingly to learn that you have been unable to get any trace of my letter containing cheque. I shall see that the general post-office takes up the case. I am confident that the cheque will yet turn up, but do not feel that you should suffer by the delay. I am accordingly going to run out to your place to-morrow, and hand you the money personally. I make the trip, partially that I may see something of the splendid work which you are carrying on in your school, so enthusiastically reported by my son.

Sincerely yours,
A. B. SMITE.

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APRIL 12, 1902.

DEAR PROFESSOR JONES:

Sudden illness prevented my visit to your place on the 1st inst., as planned, and pressure of work has made it impossible since. That I at least should not fail in my promise to put the money in your hand on that day, I sent a clerk with the cash, and I am dumfounded to learn from you that you did not receive it. The fellow has since left my employ, and I fear he defrauded me in other ways. have put an expert on his books and notified the police. I should enclose my personal cheque, but since you mention that you expect to be in town next Saturday, I beg of you to call at my office, that I may hand you the money, and thank you personally for your kindness to my son. Can you not time your visit so as to take luncheon with me at one o'clock? With pleasant anticipations of your call, I remain,

> Yours faithfully, A. B. Sмітн.

APRIL 29, 1902.

DEAR PROFESSOR:

I beg a thousand pardons for my seeming rudeness in being absent when you called. The sudden death of a brother took me from the city. I telegraphed back instructions to my cashier to hand you the money and explain my absence, but it seems the message was delayed. A new business arrangement requires that all cheques be sent on the first of the month; yours will accordingly go to you day after to-morrow. By the way, kindly send me a dozen copies of your school catalogue. I desire to hand them to such of my friends as have boys who will next year attend a school of the character of yours. Again begging your pardon, and with the earnest hope that you will visit the city again soon, I am,

> Truly yours, A. B. Smith.

> > MAY 20, 1902.

DEAR PROFESSOR:

Your letter is received. I should have written you before, but supposed that you saw in the newspapers the account of the fire which destroyed the building where my office was situated, and would understand the reason for my silence. Affairs are in a chaotic condition. Your bill was lost, along with many other important and valuable papers. Please send another, and I will forward my personal cheque; I am determined there shall be no delay in matters of this kind.

Hastily, A. B. Sмітн.

JUNE 3, 1902.

DEAR PROFESSOR:

Your letter, urging payment, is received. In sending my son his monthly allowance on the 1st, I included the amount of your bill and directed him to hand it to you. He has probably overlooked it. I have written him.

Yours truly, A. B. Smith. JUNE 14, 1902.

DEAR SIR:

Your several letters are received. As my son finished his school year yesterday and returned home, it seems to me that the matter is closed. My time is so fully taken up with important business projects of my own that

I cannot be annoyed with tales of woe concerning your private affairs. Please do not importune me further about your alleged claim against me. I have engaged a private tutor for my son next year.

Yours,

А. В. Ѕмітн.



A VALENTINE

THE morning, dear, my valentine,
And your glad eyes upon me;
The stars have all forgot to shine;
The morning, dear, my valentine,
And, oh, your smile to sun me!

The nooning, dear, my valentine,
And you to walk beside me;
To eat my bread and drink my wine;
The nooning, dear, my valentine,
And still your voice to guide me.

The even, dear, my valentine,
The white night to enfold us,
Your eyes to mirror unto mine;
The even, dear, my valentine,
And God's right arm to hold us!

ETHEL M. KELLEY.



QUALIFIED

PENFIELD—I can never think of anything to write about.

MERRITT—Why don't you become a magazine poet?



AS TAUGHT BY EXPERIENCE

PA, what is meant by 'All is fair in love and war'?" Before and after marriage, my son."

5 C

A WOMAN is never a good listener, except when she is a house-servant.

UNSAID

O LAD, if I could only say
These smiles are not for you!
But, since your eyes are turned this way,
What is there I can do?
It's one I see beyond, beyond,
My heart is leaning to.

I know, I know, the whole hour long
I have been dull and sad,
And answered not the word at all
I meant to answer, lad;
Because my wits were gone astray
With all the heart I had.

And, now, the latest ones are come,
And he is coming, too;
And I would keep the starlight back,
But, oh, it will shine through!
And, since you never turn to see,
You take it all to you.

Josephine Preston Peabody.



PROMISING

CAME for your daughter's hand, sir." "You'll find it in one of my pockets."



NOT THE DISEASE

"Do you understand women?"
"No; only a few of the symptoms."



MODESTY on parade is conceit in concealment.

THE WEDDING OF WALDO LARPONTIER

By Mary Tracy Earle

ALDO LARPONTIER was like an uninflated balloon. He felt that he had been intended to rise, yet he lacked the necessary buoyancy. Social ascendancy was his desire, and, for years, he had sought it in various boarding-houses and clubs, and in bachelor-apartment houses, where he usually failed to find himself an habitué of the other bachelors' rooms.

There was nothing magnetic about Larpontier. He was as sleek as a well-blacked pair of boots, and, inside of the sleekness, he was honest and self-seeking and painfully anxious to do the correct thing, yet, with all his effort, he was still a social waif.

As years passed, loneliness added its plea to that of ambition, and he was not only eager to be received by the beau monde, but he was anxious to marry and play the spider to society at the door of his own house. Providence did not favor him, and, at thirty-five, he was still at the bottom of that ladder of which, in his opinion, the rounds are wealth, matrimony, social success. It was at this time that chance had made him an inmate of the House of Pegs.

The house was an exclusive bachelors' club on Gramercy Park, and no one who knew it and knew Larpontier, could help feeling that chance must have had hard work in bringing them together; for, of all quaint retreats for bachelors, this little club was most quaint and farthest from the type of a balloon uninflated.

Stuyvesant, its head, was a man of fine social position, who held aloof from society because he preferred an utterly tranquil life. Seixas, professor of botany, and special student of grasses, despised society; Foster, the electrical inventor, had forgotten it except as the patron of his future devices; and Beverley, the oculist, reveled in it, and had no mind to impede his progress toward leadership by tying any sort of a clog to his heels.

Larpontier found his situation at the house disappointing; he also found life disappointing; and yet, underneath his smug exterior, there was not only honest, unimaginative self-seeking, but there was pluck—undaunted determination to get something out of the world. He began to see that he had depended too much upon the help of others. He was a business man, and, in his business, he was independent. He had not yet made a brilliant success, but he had made his way. He was at the head of a clipping agency, which advertised itself as "efficient," and counted among its patrons half of the self-conscious public men and women of the hour. When he thought how competently he had managed this agency, what written testimonials from grateful fame his announcements blazoned to the world, he lashed himself with self-contempt for his failure to build up a private life and a social connection as satisfactory as his business affairs. His loneliness cried out that marriage must be the first step, and, with jaws locked firmly under his studied smile, he sat down in his office one day, and mapped out a course of action leading to matrimony. It is thus that great generals, with their tent-flaps closed, plan great campaigns. The world is not taken into

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their confidence, but later it hears of their victories.

For the time being, Stuyvesant, Seixas, Foster and Beverley were Larpontier's world. He had learned to expect no help from them, but he hoped, in the vernacular in which his thoughts formed themselves, to "make them sit up," and scarcely a month had passed before they took the position he desired.

It was to Stuyvesant that he announced his approaching marriage. Stuyvesant carried the news to the others.

"The fiancée is a Miss Lulu Yarrington," he said, mouthing the word as if he found it particularly appropriate for Larpontier's bride-elect. "He didn't say how she is connected, or where he met her; but that's his own affair, of course. What concerns us is, that he begs as a parting favor that we should help him out at the wedding—ushers, best man, and all that, you know."

Larpontier could not have desired more erect postures than those which the three bachelors assumed. surprise in their faces was mingled with consternation at the aplomb of his request. Seixas glowered. Foster put back the long lock of hair which habitually fell across his forehead, obscuring his view of all affairs but his own, and blinked out at the others like an owl brought suddenly into daylight. Beverley, who assisted at so many weddings that a needy highwayman might count, at almost any time, upon finding a gold ring in his pocket—Beverley, who was of the world-broke into a satirical laugh, and demanded:

"Why doesn't he have some of the clerks in his office?"

"Remember that he begs it as a parting favor," Stuyvesant suggested, his clear eyes twinkling; for only such clubs as had tried Larpontier knew what boredom it was to have him for a member. "And I shall have the worst of it," he went on. "The honor of acting as best man was extended to me, and I have accepted it.

All that our friend ventured to ask from the rest of you was to usher."

"Oh," Beverley said, "if you've gone into it, I suppose there's no use for any of us to hold back. But what's ahead of us?"

"A church wedding with a reception afterward, both in the evening. Larpontier seems a little cut up because it isn't an earlier hour. He says the bride's people have some old-fashioned ideas, which he 'can only respect.' To tell the truth'—Stuyvesant leaned toward the others with an almost gossipy unbending—"to tell the truth, I scented something very queer in his whole manner, and that, as much as anything else, gave me the curiosity to see him through."

"Humph!" Beverley scoffed, "I never scented anything but patent leather about Larpontier's manner. It must be a relief to have the odor

changed."

From that day forward, until the time of the wedding, Larpontier became an object of interest in the House of Pegs. The men each congratulated him, and tried to draw him out regarding the lady he was to marry, but the gentlemanly clipping agent, usually responsive to the slightest advance, and blandly angling for advances that had not been made, kept up a mysterious reserve. Invitations arrived in due time, from which the bachelors gathered that the brideelect had a mother but no father, and that the wedding guests would be received at an address on Fifth avenue, in a region so given over to business that no one of the Pegs could remember it as containing a private dwelling or even an apartment hotel.

"Little suites for quiet families get tucked away in a great many of the old-fashioned buildings, after they have been converted to commercial uses, and some of them are most attractive, if you penetrate to them," Stuyvesant said. "I've an idea that these Yarringtons are unworldly, behind-the-times people, of whom Lapontier is a bit ashamed. I notice that he hasn't asked me to meet them

in advance, and yet he weights me down with invitations to make myself one of the family in his 'little home' after he gets settled. What do you think of that? Is he taking the flower of the outfit, and planning to cut her off completely from the parent stem?"

Seixas looked up from a botanical bulletin he was reading. "Contain your curiosity," he advised. "You may know more about them after you've attended the wedding—and you

may not."

"Do you know anything now?" Beverley demanded. "I saw Larpontier talking to you for an hour yesterday, down in the graveyard, and you let him step right on one of your grass-plots, too. If he said anything, the rest of us ought to hear it."

"If Larpontier trusted me with any of his secrets, I'm quite able to keep them for him," Seixas answered, and stumped off to the little back yard or court, which was known as "Seixas's

Graveyard."

This graveyard consisted of the long, narrow plots where he grew different varieties of grass for the sake of experiment; and, so valiant was he in defending them from trampling, that no graves could have been kept more The fact that Larpontier had been allowed to put his foot on one of them without reproof, was good foundation for the idea that he had really been making some communication of such great interest that the professor failed to notice his trespass. But, if Seixas had information, he went no further toward revealing it, and the unenlightened days passed by.

At dinner, on the evening of the wedding, Larpontier made them a speech. It was one of the customs of the House of Pegs that each departing bachelor should do this when he surrendered his "peg" to Stuyvesant. The pegs were small, unimportant-looking bits of wood, but they were the sole tangible insignia of membership, and they played a considerable part in the quaint routine of a house which clung to all its old customs with as much tenacity as if it were an Eng-

lish school. There was a salver on the hat-stand in the hall, where each member was to deposit his peg when he came in from out-of-doors; and, at night, when the small, timorous, usually invisible housekeeper had made her ten-o'clock rounds, closing windows, locking doors and barring or barricading everything she could, she looked at this salver, and, if all the pegs were in, she slid the heavy bolts at the bottom and the top of the outer door, turned the ponderous key beneath the night-latch, and stretched across the door a chain which might resist a mob. After all this was accomplished, no amount of ringing could gain admittance to the house, although, if a single peg were out, these precautions were forborne, and the bachelors could come and go with their night-keys as they pleased. It was a point of honor with them never to delete a peg permanently from the salver, and it was a point, both of pride and precaution, never to forget to take one out on leaving the house in the evening.

Larpontier took his peg from his waistcoat pocket, and held it up. Then, he smiled one of his most polished smiles, and cleared his throat. He intended to begin by saying, "I never had thought to part from this little symbol with so light a heart;" but, as he looked impressively at it, he suddenly remembered all the hopes of social advancement with which he had entered the house, and a great bitterness toward the men who had not fulfilled them took hold of him. Perhaps the peg slipped from his fingers, perhaps he snapped it; he himself could not have told. It flew across the table, and dropped into Stuyvesant's coffee with a splash.

Stuyvesant looked down, and then around him in surprise. "You're nervous, Larpontier," he said, kindly. "If you're not in a mood for speaking, we'll let you off with a hand-shake—eh, boys?"

"But I am in the mood for speaking," Larpontier answered. He put both hands flatly on the table, and leaned

forward as he stood. The smugness dropped from his face, and something crude and determined took its place. "I want to tell you something about my marriage to-night," he began. "When I first came here, I dropped hints to you, and precious little good they did me, too. I let you know that I had ambitions, that I'd like to be introduced, to take some steps forward in the social world. Not one of you lifted your finger, and I don't know that there was any reason why you should, though I'd had my hopes. I was lonesome and discouraged and sick of the world. I'd tried all sorts of ways to creep forward, and nobody would give me a hand. There were times when thought the best thing a man like me could do was to put an end to himselffurnish the raw material to fertilize one of the professor's grass-plots. And then I hauled myself up, and I said, 'No, I'll not be a fool. I'll make my own way, and some time folks shall come to me for invitations, just as they come to me for clippings now;' and I sat down in my office, and thought out a plan. The first step in it was to get married to have a home, no matter how small, where I could entertain, and where, between times, there would be somebody to call me by name and act as if I was worth the breath she spent in talking to me. After the little home would come the bigger; the small, poor companies, the fashionable ones that would make a My business was in good order and doing well. By the time I had the high-toned friends to invite, I could depend on having the money to entertain in the proper style. The thing I lacked was a wife to help me make the friends. Gentlemen, I began just like that, from coldblooded reasoning, you may say, and because I was lonesome; looked for a woman that would marry me and help me to climb a little higher in the world. Well, I found her, and, as a start toward my ambitions, I asked you all to help me

out to-night, and I piled invitations on you to visit me after I was married. You've been kind enough to agree to stand by me during the ceremony, and I thank you for it, in advance; but, as for the calls-" he straightened himself from his intent position, looked from one to another with a daring lift of the head, and smiled at them—"as for the calls, I shall be glad to see any and all of you, if you will do me the honor to come, but I take back all my urging. From to-night forward, I stand on my own feet, thankful for all favors received, but asking them from no. man, outside of business."

For a moment, there was a complete hush: such a speech as this was so out of character with the Larpontier they had known. Then, Seixas, blunt old Seixas, who had been seen to let Larpontier step unreproved on a grass-plot, bent forward, caught the eye of the bridegroomelect, in spite of its new assertiveness, and asked:

"What's changed you?"

Larpontier hesitated a moment. A flush sprang suddenly over his dark face. He looked about the room, and then blurted out:

"I'll tell you—I'm proud to tell you. I picked my wife out on—on business principles, as you may say, but she's the bargain of my life. She's too good for me to marry, and for any of you to patronize. When you see her to-night, you'll know."

Stuyvesant jumped up and held out his hand. "I didn't believe you had it in you, old fellow!" he cried.

The others crowded up in turn. Larpontier's voice and face, more than his words, had given them his secret. For the first time in their knowledge of him, self-interest had given way to a warmer feeling. On the path of policy, he had been waylaid by love.

The revelation was astonishing, but, when the men talked it over after Larpontier had left them, they realized that it was confined entirely to his state of mind. The mystery, in

which they were pleased to fancy that he cloaked the bride, remained untouched by it; he had not let fall a word as to how he had met her, or what kind of a woman she was; and their curiosity, which had been active enough before, was burning more brightly then ever when they reached the church.

Among the guests who arrived to witness the ceremony, they noticed that women were greatly in the

minority.

"I know what he's done," Beverley whispered to Foster, during a pause in their labor of conducting to seats all sorts and conditions of men in evening dress. "He's invited the fellows from the various houses where he's boarded of late years. I see Van Schaick and his gang. You never heard Van's story of how they tested a lot of girls, to see if any of them would make a suitable wife for Larpontier, did you? It was the only social aid he ever received, and it failed."

"Tell me about it," Foster said, pushing back his hair. The word "test" sounded scientific, and caught his interest at once.

Beverley chuckled, but discreetly. "They gave a reception for an artist's lay-figure they had in the house; 'Five Minutes with Mr. Smiles,' the cards read, and they offered a prize to the girl who could talk to him five minutes without breaking down or saying something inappropriate. The girls thought it was a lark, but Van and his crowd were really trying to select a wife for Larpontier, because they were bound to get him out of the club by some means. They came pretty near making a match for him, too. The girl could talk hours on end about the weather, and so could Larpontier. They followed it through the Winter, and were just getting into a streak of Spring days when her people inter-Van says, if they had been left alone, they would have been engaged in June as sure as fate. When the scheme failed, Van turned desperate and palmed Larpontier off on us. I heard the story about a week after, but I've never told Stuyvesant; he was sick enough of his acquisition, as it was."

Foster had listened, appreciatively. "It's easy to understand why Larpontier knows so few women," he said. "But how about the bride? Where are her friends, I'd like to know?"

The oculist dropped his voice even lower than it had been. His keen eyes needed none of his own skill to help them discern the plans of a social as-"Whoever she may be," he pirant. said, "I've seen from the first that he is going to cut loose from her whole connection after he marries her. If they were people to be proud of, he couldn't have refrained from talking about them all this time—no, not even to-night, when he shook his shackles off and made that speech. If they were anybody—if they weren't absolutely nobody—he would have let us know.'

Just then, Seixas came up, excitedly. "It's time for us to go out and organize the procession. The bride has come, and she's a flower," he said.

"Her family?" Beverley asked, catching him by the arm as he hurried off.

The professor turned on the two young men with a curious expression, his nostrils slightly dilated and drawn back, his eyes enigmatical. "Weeds," he answered, shortly, "weeds."

The ceremony seemed brief. It gave time to observe little more than what Seixas had summed up in two words, and, when they left the church, there was but one image in their minds that they cared to keep. bride was young; as the professor had told them, she was like a flower, and, from the moment that she and Larpontier had met at the altar, her eyes had rested on him with a love and trust and confidence that transfigured him as well as her. The bachelors forgot to question who she was, or to study her people. They were occupied in realizing that Larpontier had in truth made the bargain of his life.

Outside of the church, their feeling

of mystification returned, and it increased when they went to the appointed number on Fifth avenue and found the whole house ablaze with lights, although they had expected only the modest illumination of one floor.

"What is this place, anyway?" Beverley demanded of Foster, when they dismissed their carriage and mounted the steps.

Foster glanced around him at the neat, old-fashioned, brown-stone entrance, suggestive either of an established, conservative, New York family, or, if the steps are worn and the doormat frayed, of a boarding-house. "It's non-committal, to say the least," he declared. "But, whoever her people are, how did Larpontier ever find them out?"

"Hush! Clippings for them," Beverley whispered, as they went through the door.

They were among the last comers, and the buzz of voices issuing out into the hall told them that the first stiffness of the gathering had already passed. In the reception-rooms, the bride and her family presented as marked a contrast as in the church, and there was more opportunity for taking note of it. Now that the uplift of the ceremony had left her, the bride seemed timid and lacking in all selfpoise except that of a sustaining happiness. When Larpontier was near her, it was evident that she would have liked to keep her hand on his arm; when he was at a distance, her effort not to follow him with her eyes met with only partial success, and she had a way of flushing and trembling whenever her mother came near and lavished endearments on her. Except for the relationship between them, this would not have seemed strange, for the mother was a repellent woman, who sailed about the room under a fluffed pyramid of pale-gold hair, and was too cordial to every one. The bride's three sisters, who had acted as bridesmaids, seemed to have made a bargain with her by which she had received all the sweetness and delicacy,

and they all the assurance. One was a high-colored brunette, with eyes that were boldest when she tried most to make them coy. Another, evidently the eldest, had a worn, slightly soured face, and a manner which seemed to declare, with brusque suspiciousness, "I'm quite as good as you are, whether you believe it or not;" while the third, whom the others called Clare, was small and roly-poly, with a remarkably erect carriage, a round face, a turned-up nose, and a smile which said, as plainly as words, "I'm the pretty one, you know." Besides these ladies, there was an uncle, who had given the bride away, and two or three masculine cousins, who, when Beverley and Foster entered, had joined hands around the bride, and were wordily threatening to fence her away from Larpontier for the rest of the evening.

Through this cordon, a band of bachelors, bent on congratulation, were trying to force their way. They evidently came from quite the least-refined boarding-house which Larpontier had thought worth including in his invitations. Doubtless, they would have been straight-backed propriety itself except for the noisy cousins, but, with this example of the manners of the house, their own bearing lost its repression; they laughed and crowded one another, trying to slip under the boundary of arms, or to tear it apart.

"What a shame!" the sister called "Clare" said, smiling up at Beverley, to let him see how much more attractive she was than the bride.

Just then, Stuyvesant and Seixas entered. Something in Stuyvesant's broad-shouldered height and quiet air of commanding the world, together with the habitually militant bearing of Seixas, carried a conviction to the bride's cousins that they had asserted the rights of relationship long enough. They broke apart and withdrew. The besieging bachelors gave way also, except one who could not see the newcomers. He darted forward, surprised at his opportunity, and saluted the bride on the cheek.

There was a titter from Clare. The bride gave a gasp that was almost a sob, and her eyes searched across the group for Larpontier; he made his way to her side, trying to summon his smug, placid smile, though his face was red, and the look in his eyes told that he was far from pleased. She put out her hand to him, with a child-like gesture; he took it, and, when Stuyvesant and Seixas reached them, they were facing the room almost as if they were ready to have the ceremony performed a second time.

"Wasn't it well done?" Stuyvesant asked, a look of sympathetic banter in his eyes. "Does the knot need to be tied a little tighter, do you

think?"

"I'll put a rough old man's seal upon it," Seixas said, and kissed the bride with a mixture of reverence and tenderness, yet heartily, as he did all things.

Larpontier drew Stuyvesant to one side. "My wife is nervous; she is quite unused to—to things like this," he explained, in a low voice. "I don't see any reason why I should keep her here much longer, do you?"

Stuyvesant glanced at the bride, whom Seixas was bearing away upon his arm, and from her he looked around the room. The undesirable bachelors, who had been routed from her immediate vicinity, were gathering around the black-eyed sister. She stood among them, as in her element, teazing them over their defeat, and bending first toward one and then another, in a way that seemed to flaunt her own burning cheeks before them as something more desirable and. perhaps, more accessible than those which they had failed to reach. a moment, one of them had challenged her to make good their loss, and a clamor of gallantry arose. She evaded it, but triumphed in it, her laugh sounding above the gruff chorus of their voices with a sharply gleeful

Stuyvesant had expected all that was banal, nothing that was boisterous. It was easy to see that no timid

bride could be comfortable in such a company; but how it happened that a girl who came of such assertively tawdry people, could be gentle and timid, passed his comprehension. He turned gravely to Larpontier.

"To tell the truth," he said, "I don't see why you should stay—that is, if you don't object to disappointing

your guests."

The bridegroom drew a harsh breath. In this aside, his smile was taking a holiday. "My guests?" he answered. "They'll have the supper, and the floor to dance on—what more do they want, I'd like to know? Schaick and his party didn't come on from the church, and, as for you and Seixas and Foster and Beverley, the sooner you can cut out of it, the better you'll be pleased." He hesitated a moment, embarrassment struggling with his sudden taste for rough truths, and, when he went on, it was with increased, though halting, force. "You've stood by me," he began; "you've stood by me, and I thank you, but things are not going the way I hoped. I wanted to be proud of my wedding, and I'm not, that's all. I don't care, on my own account—I'm too lucky to care; but she's nervous. I'm going to get her out of it, and, after she's gone, there's no reason why you should stay."

Stuyvesant put a hand on Larpontier's shoulder; he had never done such a thing before. "It's you who are nervous, old boy; you're making too serious a matter out of a little

romping," he declared.

Larpontier shook his head. "Romping wasn't what I bargained for," he answered. Then his face flushed, as it had after his speech of the early evening. "The fact is, I'm not used to having anybody belonging to me," he explained, hastily, "and I didn't marry Mrs. Larpontier to have her disconcerted. It may not be good form for us to leave before the party's fairly going, but I don't care whether it is or not. This wedding's nothing to me, anyhow."

"Well, well!" said Stuyvesant: and

suddenly his curiosity, having accumulated, broke through his well-schooled features, and overspread his face. He bent slightly toward Larpontier, feeling that now—now, in such a moment of frankness—the explanation was to come. But Larpontier was of no such mind. He put out his hand, with a motion full of his new defiance.

"I thank you for all you've done, and I ask nothing more from you," he "It's doubtful if our paths ever cross again, and whether they do or not matters very little to me. You're a good man and you mean well. You've got most of the things in this world that I want, but I've got one thing you don't have that makes me better off than you. Right here, at the last, you've been kind to me, and I sha'n't forget it. If ever you get to feeling old and lonesome and adrift, just look us up. Mrs. Larpontier will remember you. I can answer for her. She'll remember you and Seixas all her life."

Stuyvesant had chosen a tranquil existence, neatly propping the seesaw of fortune to a level with his money and his good name. pontier had suddenly kicked out the props, and flung them at him, and he found himself heavily seated at the bottom of the balance, while Larpontier smiled down from above. But, wherever Stuyvesant might be, he "That's good of you; I was suave. shall not forget that offer," he declared, and his manner took the place of that fillip of the foot which sets the lower end of the beam to rising again.

Larpontier turned on his heel. "You'll remember it, and maybe you'll laugh at it—I don't care; and maybe the time will come when you will remember it and not laugh," he said.

They parted, and soon Stuyvesant saw the bride steal from the room. How and when Larpontier took her from the house was not apparent, for they said no good-byes, and no one saw them passing through the hall; but their early absence cast no gloom upon the festivities. The black-eyed

sister cut the bride-cake, and Clare made a giggling response when the bride was toasted. The bachelors from the House of Pegs withdrew, just as the dancing began.

"Well," Stuyvesant said, as they swung off, four abreast, along the empty sidewalk, "Larpontier seems to have dived to the bottom for his pearl."

The heels of Seixas rang out as if he were spurning the whole neighborhood. "Did you see anything that resembled mother-of-pearl in that crowd?" he demanded.

Beverley gave his satirical laugh. "Mother-of-paste diamonds, rather," he declared. "You might as well tell us what you know, professor, and be done with it."

"I'm going to," Seixas answered. "The last words Larpontier said to me were that he didn't care—I could tell you, if I pleased. So, here you have it. The thing was a fake, all through, except the service—fake sisters, fake cousins, fake uncle, fake mother, and an unused house, hired and furnished for the evening by the Anti-Celibate Marriage Agency."

The bachelors came to a dead halt in a row, which would have impeded other wayfarers if there had chanced to be any. They had known of substrata of society in which marriages were sometimes arranged by advertisement or by agencies, but they had never expected to take part in a wedding brought about in such a way. Stuyvesant, in particular, distrusted his hearing.

"A house hired and furnished by what?" he asked.

"The Anti-Celibate Marriage Agency," Seixas repeated. "The agent played mother. The rest were clerks and specials, hired for the evening. Don't you remember Larpontier's saying that he had used business methods? But he bargained for better style than that."

Noisy and vulgar as the family had seemed, hard as it had been to reconcile the shyness of the bride with the manners of her relatives, no solution so simple yet so strange as this had ever dawned upon the bachelors. after one, they achieved a mental grasp of it, and began to laugh as they walked on. That Larpontier's social ambitions had come to such an end was pathetic, yet it touched them first in their sense of the comic, the absurd. They could see how he had expected to deceive them and the rest of the world; how he had bar-"correct form," withgained for out realizing that the people he employed would have a different standard of form from those whom he wished to impress. They could see why the bride had been frightened, and why Larpontier had taken so early and so defiant a leave. He had thought that his careful arrangements would give him social buoyancy, that he would ascend on his wedding night. Instead, his hopes had been exploded by a burst of ill-breeding—the gas had ruptured the silk.

"But, Seixas," Stuyvesant asked, finally, "how did a marriage agency come to have that girl's name?"

"I wondered if you weren't going to ask," the professor said. "Now, we come to the part that made Larpontier tell me what was going on. She didn't send in her name at all. For all she knew, her lover dropped at her feet straight out of heaven, like any other girl's, and I suppose she thought his dropping in the very nick of time was a sure token of his source. The fact was, she'd been left in the hands of a guardian who didn't want the burden, and he sent her name and picture to the agency. In the end, to salve his conscience, he required a reference from somebody not connected with the concern, but that wasn't until Larpontier had been introduced, and the courtship was prospering."

"And Larpontier came to you for his reference?" Stuyvesant asked, amazed at the idea of blunt old Seixas helping on such a peculiar affair of the heart. "Yes," the professor said, "it was because of my position at the college; his nose for an official title led him. He didn't intend to tell me the whole story, but he was a little excited and got mixed, and out it came."

"And in spite of that, you let the match go on," Stuyvesant chuckled. "You gave him his reference, it

seems."

It was certainly an odd marriage for a gruffly scrupulous student of meadow life to have been sponsor for. Seixas cleared his throat. "It looks queer," he admitted, "but, when I found that the girl knew nothing of the circumstances and that he was touched by her confidence in him, I gave him his credentials, for I thought they might both do worse. I did try to make him give up his big wedding, but he couldn't see the harm in that, until it was too late. The girl thought the agent and her people were his friends, and that calling them her relatives was a joke; he was sure it could be carried off without undeceiving her, and he wanted to cut a swell-to show you what he could do without your help."

"Well, well!" Stuyvesant said; "well well!" Then, he began to laugh again. "Boys," he declared, "if that man ever gets back his social ambitions, there's no telling to what heights he'll reach. He has his feet on the ground now. He has dismissed us all, and is going to work

forward by his own means."

"Isn't his wife unpretentious enough to hold him back?" Beverley asked.

"His wife?" echoed Stuyvesant. "She loves him. He can mold her as he pleases. Ah, boys, he has made the bargain of his life, and I'll wager that, in five years, Beverley, here, will be attending receptions at the Waldo Larpontiers'."

"Not I!" Beverley cried, sharply. The others, being older, smiled a little. They knew that balloons could be mended. There was still time for

Larpontier to ascend.



TUT!

TEA and cake at five o'clock, Gossip supplemental, Latest fashions, matinées— Scandal incidental.

"Yes, indeed! 'Tis certain!"
"Monte Carlo, so they say—"
"Found behind the curtain."

"H'm! A nasty case, of course, Still—it's not a sad one, Though her reputation's lost, Well—it was a bad one."

W. G. YARCOTT.



HE HAD NOTICED THE IMPROVEMENT

LITTLE HAROLD—Father, God made you, didn't He?
FATHER—Yes, my son.
LITTLE HAROLD—And me, too?
FATHER—Yes, Harold.
LITTLE HAROLD—Then He's doing better all the time, isn't He?



THE PROPER DESIGNATION

PLAYWRIGHT—The scene of my new play is laid in Congress, when it is in full session.

MANAGER—What do you call it—comedy or tragedy?

"Neither—a farce."



SALLY GAY—Do you think he is in earnest?
DOLLY SWIFT—No; he kisses like a relative.



HE who realizes that he is his own worst enemy, is his own best friend.

LE SALON: QU'EST-IL? QUE DOIT-IL ETRE?

Par Victor du Bled

U'EST-CE qu'un salon? Peuton le définir d'une manière qui satisfasse l'esprit, tout en répondant à l'idéal que nous concevons de l'objet? Suffit-il de dire que le salon est une école de civilisation, une sorte de thermomètre moral de la politesse; un foyer de vie intellectuelle, de causerie, d'amitié, de tendres sentiments; le cadre où s'épanouissent la beauté et l'élégance; l'auxiliaire le plus actif des modes, du goût, de la science sociale? Ne faut-il pas ajouter qu'il constitue une des principales différences entre les peuples de haute culture et les peuples barbares? N'estce pas lui qui consacre l'influence de la femme, qui, grâce à celle-ci, donne le pas aux mœurs sur les lois, facilite ces dictatures de l'éventail, parfois aussi désastreuses que certaines dictatures de l'épée? Car il n'existe pas plus de salon sans femme que de printemps sans roses; il est des salons où les femmes règnent, il en est où elles gouvernent, il n'y en a point que leur trône, visible ou invisible, ne remplisse. Un salon sans femmes semblerait une sorte de monstre; qu'on l'appelle club, académie, chambre parlementaire, que son directeur donne des dîners non pareils, qu'on y dise de fort belles choses, j'y consens; mais puisqu'on n'y respire pas le parfum de l'éternel féminin, puisque la liberté en exclut forcément la grâce, les coquetteries de la parole, et ces raffinements délicats que suscitent l'art et le désir de plaire, ne l'appelez pas un salon.

Et cela signifie, aussi, qu'un salon est une cour minuscule, avec sa reine constitutionnelle ou absolue, ses favoris.

des ministres, des courtisans, les amis de la veille, d'aujourd'hui, de demain, les amis de tous les temps, les utiles, les agréables, les ennuyeux, qui, selon le mot de Galiani, troublent la solitude, et n'apportent point la compagnie, les indifférents, qui, parfois, montent en grade, font troupe aux jours de fête, comme les figurants à l'hippodrome et à l'opéra, ceux qu'une de mes amies appelle, "les chaises louées." Cela signifie qu'il convient de proscrire les âpres discussions, et les grands éclats de voix, qu'on ne saurait trop rappeler aux discoureurs le mot de Mme Geoffrin au comte de Coigny, qui se servait d'un petit couteau pour découper un poulet, en même temps qu'il se noyait dans un conte interminable: "Monsieur le comte, dans cette maison on aime que les couteaux soient longs et les histoires courtes." Point de querelles, beaucoup de sous-entendus, peu de gestes, rien qui ressemble aux débats de la tribune. Un sourire ne vaut-il pas une phrase, un mot spirituel une dissertation, une inflexion de la voix ne décèle-t-elle pas à l'initié des pensées de derrière la tête, toutes différentes des paroles prononcées?

Depuis le seizième siècle, c'est-àdire depuis quatre cents ans, nous avons en France des salons, et ceuxci revêtent la livrée des personnes qui les président. La cour fut le premier salon, sur lequel se modelèrent princesses du sang, grandes dames, femmes de magistrats, simples bourgeoises. Marguerite de Navarre, femme de Henri IV., restaure le fameux principe de la conversation générale à table, renouvelé des Grecs et des Romains, principe très contesté d'ailleurs, qui, au dix-huitième et au dix-neuvième siècles, a trouvé d'illustres protagonistes. Le cercle de la marquise de Rambouillet contribue à réformer la langue et les mœurs, les salons du dix-huitième siècle ont dirigé l'opinion publique, et exercé une influence sur les destinées de la nation.

Il y a bien des sortes de salons, presque autant que de sortes d'amour, et de là l'erreur des pessimistes qui prétendent que le salon français n'existe plus. Je leur réponds qu'il n'est pas si facile de comparer le présent et le passé; qu'ils sont les dupes involontaires de leurs préjugés, de leurs antipathies; je leur rappellerai le mot de Gui Patin en 1666, dans une période des plus glorieuses du règne de Louis XIV.: "Nous sommes la lie de tous les siècles;" aussi, cet autre mot d'une femme du dix-huitième siècle: "Et dire que ce que nous voyons sera un jour de l'histoire!" Nous sommes dans la vie moderne comme l'ouvrier dans une usine, comme le soldat pendant la bataille: le simple troupier ne discerne qu'un petit coin, celui où il combat; seul le général en chef, posté en haut de la colline, embrasse l'ensemble de l'action. ne confondons pas la colline avec la tour d'ivoire. Déjà, vers 1840, on Mme cette antienne à répétait Emile de Girardin; elle répondit dans un de ses plus spirituels courriers de la Presse, et elle énuméra vingt grands salons, offrant de doubler la liste. Tant pis pour vous, madame ou monsieur, si ceux là ne vous plaisent point; vos dédains ne les empêchent pas de vivre.

Salons sans épithète, salons où l'on cause et salons où l'on pose; salons d'ostentation, salons politiques, académiques, diplomatiques, littéraires, musicaux, artistiques; salons religieux, comme celui de Mme Swetchine; salons où l'on joue la comédie, où l'on danse, où l'on dîne, où l'on s'amuse où l'on s'ennuie; salons d'opposition et de gouvernement, voilà quelques variétés, et chaque variété se subdivise à l'infini. Il y a autant de

salons que de maîtresses de maisons; chaque maîtresse de maison a plusieurs salons, suivant l'heure de la journée, le nombre des visiteurs, la quantité de lumière s'il fait nuit, l'état du ciel s'il fait jour. Chez la marquise de Lambert, le mardi appartenait aux gens de lettres, le mercredi aux mondains; quelques amis intimes, comme Fontenelle, la Motte, Hénault, avaient le privilège des deux jours.

La parfaite éducation est aussi une condition essentielle de la vie de salon: elle m'apparaît comme une forme supérieure des relations des humains entre eux, une manière de civilisation perfectionnée, le christianisme mis en application, la condition de la facilité de vivre pour soi, de la douceur de vivre pour les autres. Elle consiste à ne rien dire, à ne rien faire qui froisse l'interlocuteur, à lui être agréable, au contraire, par gestes modérés, et des pensées qui plaisent; elle exige une souplesse élégante, une compréhension rapide, un tour délicat et instructif.

Le principal talent du mondain, et le plus rare, est de savoir écouter; c'est une science, bien peu la pratiquent, ou ne soupçonnent pas sa valeur. En effet, il y a des gens qui, tout haut ou in petto, répètent le mot de ce brillant causeur, "Je resterai chez les ---, si on m'écoute." Et ce sont parfois des gens aussi pleins d'eux-mêmes que vides d'idées originales, de ceux qui font penser à cette boutade: "Un tel s'ennuie; c'est qu'il s'écoute parler." Assurément, à écouter, on risque d'entendre des sots; mais s'écouter, c'est se prendre sur le fait, se trahir, se confesser à soi-même et aux autres. "J'ai renoncé à monter en chaire," observait modestement un prêtre; "je finissais toujours par y sommeiller. longtemps cherché l'explication de ce phénomène, puis je l'ai trouvée, c'est que je m'écoutais parler." D'ailleurs, bien écouter instruit, coûte peu, fait plaisir aux autres; les sots eux-mêmes sont instructifs, ils fournissent d'admirables thèmes de comparaison, des exemples à éviter, comme les ilotes que les Spartiates enivraient pour détourner la jeunesse de l'ivrognerie.

Il n'est pas tout à fait exact de dire que la conversation est l'art de se faire apprendre des choses que I'on sait par des gens qui ne les savent pas. On acquiert plus que cela, ne fût ce qu'un peu de patience. Seules les âmes brutales s'imaginent qu'ignorer ce qu'on vous dit est une marque d'humiliante infériorité, et que prononcer d'une voix arrogante, en imposant silence, témoigne d'une notable personnalité; elles entrent dans les rites et les convenances comme une automobile entrerait dans un magasin de vieux Saxes et de porcelaines de Chine.

La parfaite éducation, d'ailleurs, est une partie de l'intelligence, elle ajoute au jugement si elle n'y supplée; elle est une forme d'art; l'ensemble des manières d'un homme bien élevé constituent toute une esthétique agréable aux yeux et à l'esprit; elle devient une garantie contre les écarts de conduite qu'elle assimile à des fautes de goût; enfin elle est plus que nécessaire, elle est charmante. "Un tel est donc très instruit, très universel" demandait-on. "Non," dit un observateur, "mais il a beaucoup dîné dans la bonne compagnie."

Cette science du monde, il faut bien l'avouer, était plus répandue avant 1789 qu'elle ne l'est aujour-d'hui; une classe de la société en faisait sa principale étude; à beaucoup de ses membres elle tenait lieu du reste, leur servant de passe-partout pour arriver aux honneurs et à la fortune. Cette science du monde reposait avant tout sur le sentiment de la nuance, sentiment très subtil, presque in-définissable, qui manquera toujours à certaines personnes, eussent-elles l'avantage de vivre dans la société la plus policée.

Un tact consommé, fait de dons spontanés que perfectionne l'expérience, l'art de rendre à chacun, aux femmes, aux supérieurs, aux égaux, les égards qui leur sont dus, une conversation proportionnée au caractère et à l'esprit de ceux qu'on a devant soi, des silences variés qui, non moins que la parole, blâment ou admirent, nient ou acquiescent, ne sont-ce pas les bases fondamentales de cette science de la nuance qui, elle aussi, a sa tactique, sa stratégie, ses inspirations divines, apaise les amours-propres blessés, gagne des batailles morales? Un seul mot, une action indifférente suffisent à dénoncer son absence; un sourire, un geste révèlent l'adepte à l'initié. On peut avoir de l'esprit, du talent, du génie même, et ne rien comprendre aux nuances; elles sont les filles du goût, les compagnes de l'élégance, les consolatrices des délicats. Muses fidèles de la civilisation, gardiennes des rites sociaux, elles enseignent une sorte de langue sacrée, interdite aux profanes, doublent la puissance de séduction, pavent de leurs suaves reflets tous les sentiments et l'amour lui-même, comme dans certaines journées d'automne le soleil couchant enrichit de beautés nouvelles les forêts et la mer, la plaine et la mon-

Serrons de plus près le sujet, essayons d'énumérer les principales règles et conditions du salon idéal. Le salon idéal a-t-il existé? Depuis tantôt trente-six ans que je fréquente la société, française et étrangère, je me pose cette question. Voici, en tout cas, comment je résumerais le code du salon idéal.

I—Une maîtresse de maison recevant un certain nombre d'amies, capables d'occuper, d'attirer, de retenir les hommes.

II—S'il n'est pas nécessaire qu'elle soit jeune et jolie, il paraît fort utile que quelques unes de ses amies lui apportent ce double prestige.

III—Qu'elle reçoive souvent, qu'on ait la certitude de la trouver, qu'elle ne ressemble pas à cette Mme Benoîton de la comédie de Sardou, toujours sortie; qu'elle ne quitte point Paris l'hiver, sous prétexte de Côte d'Azur, de soleil, de santé languissante. La plupart des directrices de salons célèbres restent chez elles presque tous

les soirs, ou du moins, de cinq à sept heures; ainsi faisaient la comtesse de Castellane et Mme Swetchine; ainsi font la princesse Mathilde et la comtesse de Beaulaincourt. Rien de plus efficace pour établir la solidarité sympathique, le ciment de l'habitude, à rendre fidèle l'homme d'esprit, à

apprivoiser l'homme de talent.

IV—Il importe que le salon soit adossé à une bonne cuisine, que l'on donne des dîners, non des dîners de politesse, mais des dîners harmonieusement composés, où les convives se connaissent, s'apprécient, se recherchent; où les anciens amis dominent toujours, où les nouveaux reçoivent une sorte d'investiture sociale. Chez la marquise de Lambert, et d'accord avec celle-ci, Fontenelle, la Motte, Mairan et les autres habitués du salon prononçaient, après examen, la formule d'admission. Elle avait deux dîners de fondation par semaine: Geoffrin et bien d'autres l'imitèrent. De nos jours, alors que les hommes de loisir se font rares, et les travailleurs de plus en plus nombreux, donner des dîners devient le moyen indispensable pour attirer ces derniers; avant, ils n'ont pas le temps; après, ils préfèrent rester chez eux, au coin de leur feu, avec un bon livre, ou aller au club. On ne sait pas assez que les hommes font leurs politesses en rendant des visites, que les femmes leur doivent de la reconnaissance quand ils se soumettent à ce devoir social, qui souvent empiète sur d'autres devoirs beaucoup plus impérieux.

Aux femmes qui veulent avoir une maison, je ne saurais trop citer ce trait de mon amie la comtesse de L—, qui, ayant entendu vanter par un académicien un certain plat d'épinards, s'informe sans bruit, entame une correspondance, fait venir de Lyon à Paris l'auteur de ce mets divin, pour qu'il enseigne la recette à son cuisinier. Il y a aussi de l'esprit à contenter la guenille, car la plupart des hommes demandent trois choses aux femmes: d'être jolies, de savoir faire ou commander la cuisine, de les écouter, ou d'en avoir l'air; et, n'en

déplaise aux féministes extrêmes, longtemps encore ces qualités conserveront

leur prestige.

V—Il faut que dans les dîners et réceptions règne une liberté de bon goût, tempérée par une autorité douce qui se devine plus qu'elle ne se fait sentir. Chef d'orchestre sans archet et sans geste, la dame de céans maintient la mesure, intervient pour empêcher les discussions trop vives. Mme Campan avait un système de conversation pour les dîners; elle prétendait que tel ou tel sujet s'impose, selon le nombre des convives: voyages, littérature, si l'on est douze; beauxarts, sciences, inventions, si l'on est huit; philosophie, politique, si l'on est six; choses sentimentales, rêves de cœur, romans, si l'on est quatre. La Fontaine n'établissait pas de distinctions si subtiles, il disait joliment, et, à mon avis, sagement:

"La bagatelle, la science, Les chimères, le rien, tout est bon; je soutiens Qu'il faut de tout aux entretiens. C'est un parterre où Flore épand ses biens; Sur différentes fleurs l'abeille s'y repose, Et fait du miel de toute chose."

Mme Aubernon de Nerville tenait pour la conversation générale à table; une seule personne parlant à la fois, point d'âpreté, point de causerie parasite, les duos renvoyés après le dîner. Ce système, pratiqué avec une vigueur parfois excessive, produisait néanmoins de merveilleux résultats, grâce à l'habileté de la maîtresse de maison.

VI—Que la directrice du salon ait de l'esprit, cela semble indispensable; qu'elle ait toutes les sortes d'esprit, il importe peu, pourvu qu'elle possède celui de mettre en valeur ses causeurs, d'en tirer le son et l'éclair, de faire abnégation d'elle-même, de ne pas souffrir qu'on dise du mal des absents.

VII—Qu'elle frappe de temps en temps un grand coup: une fête originale, la comédie de société, quelque artiste inédit, quelque personnage inconnu qui pique la curiosité comme un plat exotique. Le proverbe normand dit: "Changement d'herbage réjouit les bœufs." Nous sommes tous un peu

troupeau, et les physionomies nouvelles nous attirent.

VIII—Que l'ami trouve auprès de la maîtresse de maison le conseil qui éclaire, la parole qui fortifie, l'inspiration qui développe la puissance créatrice, la consolation qui soutient dans les heures mélancoliques.

IX—Un grand nom, de la fortune, du crédit par le mari ou les amis, sont

autant d'excellents apports.

X—Que notre femme idéale accueille les jeunes gens avec bienveillance, les présente aux puissants, leur facilite l'entrée dans la vie. La jeunesse a tant de grâce, elle fait si bien dans le paysage! Elle est, à elle seule, un rayon de soleil, une victoire.

XI—Compter un ou plusieurs grands hommes dans son salon, grands hommes de conversation qui placent leur gloire en viager, grands écrivains, grands capitaines, grands politiques, grands orateurs.

Sans doute, peu de femmes ont réuni un tel ensemble de qualités intérieures et extérieures, et l'on peut fonder un salon de premier ordre à moins de frais. Parmi celles qui, au passé, ont le plus approché de cet idéal en France pendant le dixneuvième siècle, je citerai: Mme de Rémusat, Mme de Staël, Mme Récamier, la duchesse de Duras, la comtesse de Boigne, la comtesse de Castellane, Mme de Girardin, la marquise de Blocqueville, Mme Aubernon de Nerville, Mme Charles Cartier; quelques unes de ces femmes viennent seulement de nous quitter pour toujours. Et au présent: la princesse Mathilde, Mmes L. Buloz, Jane Dieulafoy, Edmond Adam, Alphonse Daudet, Taine, Emile Ollivier, la vicomtesse de Janzé, la comtesse de Beaulaincourt, la comtesse Jean de Castellane, la comtesse Greffulhe, née Caraman Chimay, et la princesse de Wagram. y a donc encore des salons véritables, et il y en a qui poussent, qui se développent, qui remplacent les disparus.

Comme repoussoir, et pour achever la démonstration, je veux esquisser le salon banal, le salon vulgaire, le salon de pacotille.

Vingt parleurs pour un causeur, cinquante rimeurs pour un poète, cent salons de pacotille pour un salon digne de ce nom. C'est l'histoire de l'éternelle médiocrité, de l'éternel mouton Panurge, de la grenouille qui s'efforce de ressembler au bœuf; c'est cette loi générale qui veut que beaucoup de glands soient nécessaires pour produire un chêne, que beaucoup d'officiers n'arrivent pas au grade de général. Un salon est une œuvre d'art et de patience, et peu de gens sont artistes, très peu ont la persévérance dont Buffon faisait la condition même du génie. Aussi les salons à la minute, les salons à la douzaine fourmillent-ils dans Paris, la grand' ville.

Quels sont les caractères du salon de pacotille? Tout d'abord il sent l'improvisation; il lui manque cette première vertu, la durée, et l'on est tenté de répéter le mot qui échappait devant ces charmants palais de la rue des Nations à l'Exposition Universelle, "Tout cela sera détruit l'an prochain!"

Et puis l'observateur remarque une Les invitafoule de dissonances. tions sont trop facilement accordées, et je sais certaines maîtresses de maison qui les font offrir; elles ont même des racoleurs qui vont à la chasse de l'homme célèbre ou seulement distingué; de la beauté professionnelle, des personnes très bien nées; celui qui ramène une altesse, petite ou grande. Les dîners manquent d'harmonie; on met, les uns à côté des autres, des gens qui ne peuvent s'entendre ou même qui se détestent; la conversation est incohérente, et les causeurs se trouvent noyés dans le flot des bavards qui ne savent pas écouter. S'agit-il d'une soirée, on invite huit cents personnes pour des salons qui peuvent en contenir deux cents, et je me rappelle certain raout chez Mme de B—— où nous faisions littéralement la queue dans l'escalier avant d'entrer. Trop de monde, aucune intimité; des concerts interminables où les hommes restent debout dans les embrasures des portes et ne songent qu'à s'enfuir; des amphitryons qui vous connaissent à peine et ne s'occupent pas de vous; des

invités qui viennent des quatre points de l'horizon; la confusion des langues, des esprits; l'absence de tact et de goût, voilà les principaux traits du saler de poetille.

salon de pacotille.

N'exagérons rien cependant. Une femme de beaucoup d'esprit disait naguère, à un aimable amateur en tout genre: "Vous êtes le triomphe de l'à peu près." Le mot peut s'appliquer à un certain nombre de ces salons improvisés. De même que certains députés ont des minutes, des quarts d'heure d'éloquence, de même ces salons trop mondains vous ménagent parfois une rencontre exquise et imprévue, l'audition d'un artiste qui remue toutes les fibres de votre âme, une impression de beauté collective. On y voit, amenés par des raisons de flirt ou de convenance, des gens très spirituels, et l'on y entend des propos réjouissants; telle naïveté a son prix, telle fatuité s'épanouit en paroles comiquement sucrées.

N'est-elle pas charmante, cette réflexion d'une beauté professionnelle des bals de la présidence, à laquelle ses amies parlaient des chapeaux qu'elles comptaient emporter aux eaux? Comme on lui demandait ce qu'elle ferait, elle répond du ton le plus naturel, "Je ne sais pas, et peu m'importe, car j'ai une figure qui appartient à l'histoire."

Et ce gros banquier distrait à qui, l'autre soir, quelqu'un demandait des nouvelles de sa femme, et qui répond machinalement, "Molle et offerte!"

Quant aux moyens d'élever ces châteaux de cartes mondains, rien de plus simple, et en réalité la recette est à la portée de tous. Des fêtes, encore des fêtes, toujours des fêtes! Seulement, il y a la manière; nous jouerons le même air, observait un homme d'Etat, mais nous le jouerons mieux. Il y a des degrés, comme il y a des demi-talents, des trois quarts de talents. Avec de l'argent, beaucoup d'argent, on arrive déjà à un résultat, et je veux rappeler le mot du vieux comte de B. S—— un beau type d'avare et d'égoïste, auquel une mienne amie

proposait de le présenter à une dame:

- "Donne-t-elle des dîners?"
- "Non."
- "A-t-elle une loge à l'Opéra?"
- "Non."
- "A-t-elle un château pour l'automne, les chasses d'automne?"
 - "Non."

"Alors, pourquoi voulez-vous que je fasse sa connaissance?"

Ce cri du cœur contient une grande leçon à l'usage des apprenties directrices de salon.

Dans certain salon de pacotille, une arriviste mondaine interpelle Mme de G——:

"On m'assure, madame, que vous avez affirmé que j'étais l'amie trop intime du Grand Duc . . .!"

"Je m'en suis bien gardée, çà vous aurait fait trop plaisir, puisque vous faites tout ce qu'il faut pour qu'on le croie."

Nota bene.—Il y a des salons de pacotille qui, avec du temps, de l'habileté, finissent par s'élever à peu près au rang des salons véritables.

Après avoir essayé de définir la maîtresse de maison idéale, de salon idéal, je voudrais, en quelques lignes, présenter l'homme du monde, l'invité idéal.

Entendre raillerie pour sa part, railler très peu soi-même; éviter les mystifications de parole, la médisance; contredire rarement et avec beaucoup de modération; bannir le moi, montrer l'esprit de son âge, de sa situation; ne pas prendre pour facilité de parler une impossibilité de se taire; ne pas confondre avec la conversation la calomnie; se souvenir qu'on parle autant avec le ton, le geste et la physionomie qu'avec la langue; que les premiers disent sou-"non" quand celle-ci dit, "oui;" laisser venir à soi la parole, ne pas se précipiter sur elle, à l'exemple de ce grand faiseur de monologues qui ne s'arrêtait que lorsqu'il toussait ou crachait; ne dire devant les gens distingués que des choses qui vaillent la peine d'être dites; garder pour les intimes les riens aimables, la confiance qui se répand avec abandon; mais observer aussi que le silence est l'esprit des sots, et que les sots silencieux sont des armoires vides, fermées à clef; faire, même en causant, la cour à cette bonne raison qui sert à tout et ne nuit à rien; ne pas aller dans un salon pour faire ses affaires, pour se moquer de la toilette ou de la beauté de ses voisines; semer de la bonté dans son esprit, voilà ce que je demande tout d'abord, voilà les vertus mondaines qui, au passé, au présent, sont l'apanage d'une foule de sonnes en France.

Je demanderais encore à l'invité idéal de posséder la science du compliment, l'art de plaire sans sacrifier un atome de sa dignité, de réparer un malentendu par un mot, de donner à la louange qui contient un dixième de vérité le caractère de la vraisemblance, de telle sorte que les neuf autres dixièmes paraissent naturels, et que la galerie admire la forme tout en faisant des réserves sur le fond; une science qui eut ses hommes de génie sous l'ancien régime, et qui rencontre encore quelques initiés.

La du Barry, essayant de ramener à elle le duc de Choiseul, observait que les premiers ministres ne renvoient pas les favorites, qu'au contraire les favorites chassent les ministres, et elle ajoutait:

"Le roi a dit qu'il ne changerait jamais."

Choiseul, s'inclinant avec grâce,

répond: "Ah, madame, quand le roi a dit cela, le roi vous regardait."

Mme ——, plus charmante que jamais, assistait à une soirée, assise entre deux femmes, une laide et une

"Ma voisine de droite (la jolie) vous paraît-elle bien?" demandet-elle au comte d'Estournel.

"Tout ce qui vous approche s'em-

"Vous me faites là un drôle de compliment!"

Estournel soutient qu'il était de bon aloi, et il ajouta avec le poète persan:

"Ce qui touche à la rose participe de son parfum. Vous embellissez ce qui vous approche, et c'est d'autant plus généreux que je défie qu'on vous le rende."

"Et pourquoi?"

"Je vous demande la permission de répondre par deux vers adressés à une indifférente. Je ne me rappelle plus d'où ils viennent, mais je sais très bien où ils vont:

"L'amour seul pourrait l'embellir, L'amour est le dieu des miracles.

Un de mes amis, qui venait d'avoir cinquante ans, se plaignait d'arriver à l'adolescence de la vieillesse.

"Mes années m'ennuient," gémis-

m'ennuient autant que vous," repartit avec à propos de l'Espine.

L'invité idéal est aussi nécessaire que la maîtresse de maison idéale pour former le salon idéal.

JUST SO

HE poor fellow went blind and crazy at the same time." "Ah, I see! Out of sight, out of mind."

HEY say she is going to marry a mere actor." "Well, one must make a beginning." Feb. 1903

ECONOMY

(A VALENTINE)

SEND, O sweetest friend. A kiss; Such as fair ladies gave Of old, when knights were brave. And smiles were won Through foes undone. And this will be For you to give again to me; And then, its present errand o'er, I'll give it unto you once more, Ere briefest time elapse, With interest, perhaps. Its mission spent, Again to me it may be lent. And thus, day after day, As we a simple law obey, Forever, to and fro, The selfsame kiss will go: A busy shuttle that shall weave A web of love, to soften and relieve Our daily care. And so, As thus we share, With lip to lip, Our frugal partnership, One kiss will always do For two. And, oh, how easy it will be To practise this economy!

ARTHUR MACY.



SHE—I hear awful stories about you. Tell me, what kind of a past have you had?

HE—Oh, nothing to speak of!

到派

A RGUING with a woman is a great deal like going into a shower-bath with an umbrella—what good will it do you?

FROM A LITTLE RED BOOK

By Virginia Woodward Cloud

THE RED BOOK. MIDNIGHT

HE Reuters' fête was a complex agony in variegated lanterns and impossible prices. Roman Darrell suggested the cultivation of truthfulness, by telling it subrosa. I was near the Japanese junk, in a halo of gas balloons and an accompaniment of hideous sound, which is the human voice in mass, when he materialized from the darkness, and stood in silent contemplation of my ecstatic enjoyment.

I spoke first.

"Superb! I am intoxicated with a rapturous desire to promote charity, and ask nothing more exalted than to spend every evening on the battle-ground of a bazaar, every afternoon watching strenuous young women play golf tragically, and every morning anticipating a luncheon or tea—via Aunt Susannah."

He acknowledged this panegyric,

imperturbably.

"I have seldom witnessed a more delirious exhibition of youthful ex-

uberance than yours," he said.

"What more would you have?" I paused, to decline poisonous-colored pop-corn from Letitia Vanness. "If I expressed my sensations actively, I should break into indecorous dancing, after the manner of King David."

"Apropos of—?" he murmured.
"Mrs. Kitt. We passed half an hour over a fight between her cook and housemaid, and fifteen minutes over the plaster on her side." Mrs. Kitt was, at this moment, making change out of a pasteboard box, and there was madness in her eyes. "If

you notice, everything she wears is on the side. I deducted the reason while she discoursed sweet sounds. Her looking-glass is turned from the light, and her mind——"

Darrell interrupted with a comparison concerning life, which I

waved aside.

"It would be good, if I had not

already thought of it."

"Of course, Eve exhausted the resources of Eden before Adam had made the first round. Is there nothing new to you?"

"Nothing here." I looked at the kaleidoscopic crowd. "I am even inspired toward truth-telling, for an

experiment."

Darrell remarked that he would

not have imagined so.

"Why, I am sure that even a way-faring man, though a—journalist, could interpret my elementary imagery," I returned. "Before you occurred—like apologetic lightning in a monotonous sky—I was pondering over the effect upon one's personality of continually saying that which one does not feel, and doing that which one does not wish to do."

"Ah, now you are truthful!" said Darrell. He was leaning against a tree, watching the mêlée, and about as much in touch with the tumtums, shrieks and whistles around us as would have been a dryad from the

woods.

"For some occult reason, I am tempted to break away from this, and lose myself among the trees," I continued, "or else, remaining here, to lapse into bare, brutal, ungarnished truth-speaking—a banal impulse, I

admit, and only indulged in by people who oil their hair and wear creaking shoes. I see that you imagine it a pose. Try me! One must have somebody to practise it on."

"I might serve," said Darrell; "I write it occasionally over a penname, and the result is terrific. I go around all the next day with my face bared to the light of heaven, my soul unmasked—."

"It sounds immodest," I ventured.
"—unmasked, revealing the sera-

phim—or the lover."

"Who is she?" I said, gently.

"Art, of course." He looked off into the crowd, and folded his arms. "Art, the adorable one, who alone forces us to be true." Here he declined gas balloons, at fifteen cents an explosion.

"But the truth is so-unbeliev-

able," I remonstrated.

"Try it!" said Darrell, almost with enthusiasm; "write it! Truth-telling may be cultivated. I own that, for a woman—"

"Pouf!" I interrupted; "men have a threadbare fallacy that women seldom speak sincerely, yet cannot keep a secret! Woman's life is one great secret—its limitations, its impossibilities, its unsuspected capabilities, its suppressions. She is the embodied diplomacy of centuries, the flower of refined secretiveness. When she does tell you the hard truth, which is seldom, you do not believe her."

"Heresy from a disciple of Art!"

Darrell murmured.

I admitted that I was supposed to paint miniatures and indulge in writing tales for my support.

"Yours is the cleverest novel--"

began Darrell.

"Hardly, since Mrs. Kitt assures me that she has read my 'pretty little story,'" I said. "Why do our familiars allude to our results, artistic and professional, as little? Admitted, then, that I am a miniature-painter and a writer, that does not prevent Miss Pettit from steering in this direction to ask me to hand ice-

cream plates and undertake the raffle of an automobile."

He intercepted Miss Pettit, adroitly,

and I heard him say:

"Miss Delgywnn is about to revive me with tea. I am obliged to take quarts of tea, because the rapturous beauty of affairs such as this works upon my over-sentient temperament. Keep me a dance—I mean a raffle—dear Miss Pettit, until I return. Miss Delgwynn will now support me to the junk. I never stop short of nine cups—the subtle influence of *Mr. Weller* in my youth."

He swept me into a leafy corner of the junk on a tide of tea-drinkers. We were isolated by shadow, and the lanterns were rainbow petals floating on darkness. There was night behind us, and the whisper of leaves—that subtle whisper which always stirs in me something akin to pain.

"Thank you; I never take it," I said, as he signaled to a make-believe Geisha. "I knew an Englishwoman who drank fourteen cups daily, and at fifty years developed an inordinate vanity and love of pale-blue ribbon."

Darrell leaned forward; his eye was stern.

"You might as well own up; you are heart-sick of neutrality—like Bettina."

"It is a commonplace yearning for truth, and may be contagious in the early stages," I said, warningly.

"I have had it. It finds us sage,

and leaves us jester," said he.

There is something so thorough about Darrell that I am fearless with him.

"Do you believe that we could tell the actual truth about ourselves?—

our hopes and lives?"

"Desires and dreams?" he supplemented. "I have never tried it, but cannot imagine any one succeeding, unless in a diary."

"Oh, do not ask me to keep a diary!" I interpolated, thinking affectionately of a little red book in my desk; "the ones I have seen have been drivel. Fancy the humiliation

of my some-day grandniece, who discovers it laid away in an inevitably discoverable spot. 'Mama!' cries grandniece, 'here is a manuscript by Aunt Lenore! We shall publish it, and reap a fortune!' Alas! they peruse it, only to find that the aunt, who is the one literary bloom upon the family tree, was merely a commonplace fool, like the others. When I keep a diary, it shall be solely for the purpose of cultivating the truth."

"To be writ down a fool," said Darrell, "would be fame enough for It is he alone who experiments, delights, keeps humor vital, beauty

alive, and is—the lover."

A note in his voice gave me something of a shock. I sat with my hands locked, in an ill-bred manner, upon the table, and my gaze upon night.

"Then, my shade need not feel humiliated when grandniece discovers me," I remarked; "at any rate, she cannot write me down a love-lorn one.'

"I imagine not," said Darrell, with a grimness which caused me again to

catch the current.

"My desire to speak the truth periodically is not actuated by vanity. You see, I am at work—or wish to be at work—on another book, although no one knows it---"

"Thank you!" he murmured.

"-other than yourself; and one grows so accustomed to glossing things over with toleration, and by the affirmative attitude, that to-day I almost wish I had never seen what we call civilization. I should like to have belonged to the primeval forest, where love was love and hate was hate—a sort of an eye-for-an-eye training. One must be true to that which may be one's art; at the same time, one must adapt one's self to existing conditions, which are foreign and opposed to it. What is the result?"

Darrell nodded, comprehendingly, and tapped the table with his pencil.

"Suppose, instead of the despised diary, you select a middle-aged ac-

quaintance, such as myself, as a depository for your truthfulness—no questions asked."

"But I may say something horrid about you," I interrupted, "and prattle of things outside your sphere.'

"What is my sphere? Dear lady,

tell me; what is my sphere?"

"A man who has arrived at the years of—of indiscretion, should have found it," I said, severely, for the light of the navigator was in his eye. "Really, I must go. Dr. Bayne is towing in this direction, to inquire why I did not cut flannels at the mothers' meeting on Thursday. Think you, if I tell him that I preferred to paint a nose that is worth a hundred dollars to me, he would understand? Never! The first time you are reincarnated in feminine form, and endeavor to pursue an art under Aunt Susannah's wing, vou will understand."

"Now, a modish result such as this?" Darrell designated my grenadine gown.

"This, as you are pleased to call it, is Madame Volcott's chin. It cost me the scraps of six days and much distraction of mind. This hat—a lyric in green leaves and white lace—is Louise Lorraine's profile. Do you like it?"

He said, but not in words, that he found it quite endurable, and I arose,

precipitately.

"I must go at once. Will you disentangle Aunt Susannah from the arms of the fête? You will know her by the cake clasped to her heart, and a picture-frame around her neck. Her commercial experience, so far, has consisted in buying; but, to-night, the spirit of a trader forefather runs high."

"And the Letters of Truth?" said Darrell, without the least distraction

from our original subject.

"Age before—experience," I said. "Then, you prefer me to begin?" "Of course! Besides, you must

promise me to destroy—

"Not unless I first make mad," said Darrell.

believe that I weakened. fear that you do not think I mean it."

"Your creditable desire to reform and be truthful? I assure you——"

I turned away, contemptuously. "Oh, if you are going to be stupid and commonplace, I retract! Good night! Such a charming talk, Mr. Darrell!"

And I drove away with Aunt Susannah.

THE RED BOOK. AUGUST 21

I cannot refuse to go with Aunt Susannah. It is like a cold plunge—or it must be—to refuse to do the

things one has always done.

I am becoming the composite of people around me. To-day, Aunt Susannah told me that I laughed like Mrs. Vorneck. Fancy laughing like a stringpulled wax doll! If I had known how, I should have ground my teeth in rage. But I never feel rage. I do dislike Mrs. Vorneck, her affectations and flattery and efforts toward self-promotion. She dislikes me subtly, and we sustain a semblance of polite regard. I do not care very much now, and often forget my real knowledge of her. . . . Do I wish to feel keenly? Once, I should have reveled in it—the tears and raptures, pain, joy, all of it. All of what? Love? . . . No! no! I will not!

TO ROMAN DARRELL. AUGUST 21

Your initiatory letter is a model of veracity. The classified questions are the embodiment of lucidity.

Why did I drive away with Aunt Susannah at prize-winning speed?

Why have I not married?

And your P. S., to the effect that you will not write more because it is too warm, is journalistic in the extreme. I shall file the questions, and reply in time. At present, I am packing, with Jeanne's exclamatory assistance, while Aunt Susannah has each trunk unpacked, that she may number the contents. We are going. Where? Ask Aunt Susannah.

LENORE DELGWYNN. P. S.—I do not wish to go, at all.

TELEGRAM FROM ROMAN DARRELL TO MISS DELGWYNN

Are you going abroad? Which steamer? Wire.

R. D.

TELEGRAM FROM MISS DELGWYNN TO ROMAN DARRELL

Mail forwarded Equitable Bank. Refer Aunt Susannah.

L. D.

THE RED BOOK. AUGUST 25

If Aunt Susannah knew that she had opened to me the universe, the real world, I fear that she would close it

again.

I have been in the woods—my woods. Oh, the hush, the sounds of silence, the water beyond, murmuring its secret that is forever hinted, forever kept! Oh, the light laughter of mockery in each wave's plash! Oh, the mystery and nobility of a tree! The helpless greatness, the embodiment of wind, rain, sun, shadow, sound, silence and centuries!

All the trees take on a half-human aspect; now and then, a profile peers from the rugged bark—a giant's profile, half-monster, half-god. They quiver with the laughter of Time.

To know his littleness, the human should spend much time with the trees. The sap stirring around me defies, claims and christens me. I step within a dream—and am at home.

TO ROMAN DARRELL. AUGUST 25

Having been wiped off the map by Aunt Susannah, I proceed to answer your rapidly accumulating questions.

I am writing from No-Matter-Where, as Aunt Susannah has stipulated extreme seclusion. For the key to the stipulation, see Mrs. Vorneck and their mutual motive.

The Motive is already evident to the naked eye. He wears white duck, and smokes cigarettes. He is worth much money. Aunt Susannah may move, at times, in a mysterious way, but she sometimes fails to perform wonders.

I am altogether obtuse where the Motive is concerned. I also admire your indifference in not asking where we are. It proves that such trifles as occult disappearances fail to move you. Hereafter, bear in mind, I am under Truth's ban. Where did I inherit such a plebeian desire? Surely, not from

Aunt Susannah, for, when she announced her sudden eagerness for wave-

swept solitude, she said:

"I long, my dear Lenore, to draw near to Nature's heart once more; to feel her pulse throbbing in tune with my own; to lay my head upon her breast, and to rest the mind by uninterrupted reading. Put all of Browning in the trunk; and, besides, as our dear Mrs. Vorneck says, it will permit you to paint, to your heart's content, upon your sweet little pictures."

The longer we are a part of humanity, the more willing we become to be misled by it. I would not analyze the reason, and rejoiced in the first stages of rurality. Then, I detected Aunt Susannah sending cards to the Motive's villa—a portentous effort at bohemianism, with his name cut over the gateway, and a gilt lightning-rod on the tower. I no longer saw through a glass darkly.

Aunt Susannah was never more miserable. She loathes the country, and abominates more water than will fill her bathtub. It is, after all, more orderly to lay one's head upon a wicker lounge under pink Venetian blinds than upon the breast of earth. Iced sherbet is more soothing than the banks and braes hereabouts, and the sitting-room is strewn with books not always catalogued with Browning at The occurrence of the the library. Motive is praiseworthy for its punctuality. There is but one little spot which he has not discovered—the hammock is hung there, near the water.

Why did I drive away from the fête with Aunt Susannah? Had I remained longer, you would have inferred that I delighted in your society, and I have known as good, as Crusoe remarked when Friday salaamed to him.

Again, I have always driven away with Aunt Susannah. It was a colossal mistake made in the beginning, and doubtless ever shall be—that of always doing what is expected of one. Had I gone long ago, an openly acknowledged bread-winner, it would have been easier. It divides one's

force, one's very life, and weakens all one's results, to serve two mistresses.

The Motive, in fresh white duck, is veering in this direction—for I am out of doors.

L. D.

P. S.—Ask the nearest man the answer to your second question. He will tell you that no woman ever remained single, who had the opportunity of being anything else.

TO ROMAN DARRELL. SEPTEMBER I

Your letter is quite carping to-day. I admit the evasion in the P. S., but it was from the masculine point of view. That which you mistake for seriousness is merely the process I always undergo in getting back to myself under Nature's tutelage. It is rather painful, like slow pressure on a nerve, but continues, with interruptions from Aunt Susannah. No one, with an atom of what you call the artistic temperament, should take another seriously. If he does, he will have his feelings hurt. I rehearsed it long ago, and was a Niobe for days, and wiser afterward.

Lucia Winter says that she has been happy only since I proved to her that she took her husband seriously. Nevertheless, you claim that I am growing serious. It is only the dreamy pines and the sound of waves. At a certain stage, I shall weep, and hail it with delight as a signal of remaining youth, then relapse into inconsolability over Time's pillaging and the realization that, in the words of Mr. Lamb, it is a long way from granite to the oyster.

L. D.

THE RED BOOK. SEPTEMBER I

To-day, from a clump of pines on a ridge, I scanned the coast with my glass, and saw a man walking alone on the point, two miles away. There was something in the walk and the way he carried his head that told me I could not be mistaken; yet I hope it was not he. At least, I think that I hope so.

I cannot go on with the book, as I had planned. I am tired of pretend-

ing not to understand Aunt Susannah's efforts toward the Motive. He is always coming or going, like a pendulum.

The creative is dulled by disuse; there has been so little real opportunity to work, to do anything except talk to Aunt Susannah, write her dictated letters, and walk with the Motive! Yet, now and then, there is the pine wood.

Yes, I suppose the one thing I take seriously is Art. It is the only thing worth it—that and a mother.

Oh, if I had a mother! But not even here can I write of her.

FROM MRS. WINTER TO MISS DELGWYNN. SEPTEMBER 2

Lenore, dearest, give thanks, fasting, that you are not here. The city is the deserted village, and humanity is at its ugliest. I read between your lines that you are pensive. That invariably means with you a new composition or— Now, that you are at a safe distance, I can venture it. wish that you would marry Roman Darrell. He is such a dear, and I think that you would make him so happy. I met him on the street; he looked rather low in his mind. I described your island, as you described it to me, without saying a word of your being on it. He jumped at conclusions. My dear, when a man develops clairvoyancy, there is but one conclusion. Refer Aunt Susannah to me, should he occur, and—be lenient with him

Yours,

Lucia.

P. S.—Don't be angry with me, dear. I really believe that you are quite suited to him.

THE RED BOOK. SEPTEMBER 3

I could not claim to be surprised, as Lucia Winter was bound to tell it, sooner or later. I sat on the top step of the piazza, leaning back against the clematis. The moon was white on the grass-plot and dial, and the katydids were assiduous. Aunt Susannah sat within, beside a lamp. She was wrapped in white wool and dreams.

"Yes, I was the man on the point,"

said Darrell. He had emerged from the night like materialized thought only he did not know it—and seated himself on a lower step, without permission.

"There are people up at the hotel—I know them. Your description made the place appear quite bearable," he murmured.

"Who is the girl?" I asked.

"I have never thought of her as a girl," said he, musingly.

"How interesting! Is she what the

Motive would call—elderly?"

Darrell leaned back, luxuriantly, and contemplated me. "Old enough to know better," he said.

"It is so easy for that which you term the artistic temperament to tire," I mused.

"Has the—Motive discovered that?"

asked Darrell.

"The Motive is not experimental; he is serious, a folk-lorist. I used a harmless expression the other day, somewhat after the order of 'the proof of the pudding,' you know. He caught up his hat, and swept home on a wave of enthusiasm, to look it up. It seems it was folk-lore. I had used it carelessly, without suspecting its gravity."

"Poor little fellow!" said Darrell, in

turn, irrelevantly.

"Not at all! Not quite so—so colossal as yourself, perhaps, but quite a size! You men think so much of size! You always call a large woman 'a fine woman,' whereas she may not have a heroic bone in her body! I wish, however, that I weighed one hundred and eighty."

"You do not," interpolated Darrell, coolly; "you are glad in your soul that you are slim and lissome. The love-

liest size for a woman——"

My wide-eyed amazement must have been expressive, for he added: "—is—I really forget what, although I have read it."

"You might ask her to measure when you go back to the hotel," I suggested.

Darrell watched a huge moth dragging its wings helplessly along the

step. Then, he said:

"The Letters of Truth do not seem to have been altogether successful."

"Really! When I have written you nothing but the whole truth! Perhaps, the girl at the hotel is—is an excessive truth-teller?"

"Heaven forbid!" said Darrell, "because, when she declines to spend her life making me happy, I need not

believe her."

"If she has survived so far without making you happy, she had better continue in her present estate," I said, conclusively; "unless she possesses no atom of that uncomfortable commodity which you call the artistic temperament. It is too difficult for a woman with talent to lay it aside, and live for another."

"Jove!" murmured Darrell, "what is the matter with that one living for

her?"

"He never does," I averred. "I knew a girl who could play the violin; she adored it, and spent years studying it. A man came along and married her, and she settled down to a life of enforced care and domestic drudgery, with nursing thrown in. I saw her two years afterward, and she was a wistful wraith, with eyes full of unconfessed regret and resignation."

"Is that the reason, Lenore?" he

said, with sudden gravity.

I nodded. "There is something

stronger," I murmured.

He suddenly leaned forward, with an arm across his knee, and regarded me, dominatingly. "What are you talking about? What can be stronger than love?" He held my eyes by the power of his will. There were only the sounds of night insisting upon the brain, making life a dream. "What is stronger than love?"

I turned my face away, that I might think the better. "I do not know what it is. Once, you spoke of Art in that way; I knew exactly how you felt, but I could not speak of it. I think that is it."

"Art! Art is full of love's realization."

"Love's promise," I interrupted.
"Art is the child of feeling. Look

at me! How dare you speak of there being anything stronger than love!"

For a second, I looked at him. Oh, yes, I was glad to look at him! He drew my hands to his lips, and kissed them. I pulled them away.

"There is; there is something," I breathed, "not stronger than love, but stronger than our endurance of love's demands! Oh, look up! Are not the stars solitary? A soul, too, may be solitary, and may love, even better, but not yield itself! Oh, no, please," for he tried to seize my hands again. But I released myself, and fled into the house.

Aunt Susannah opened her eyes as I stood on the threshold.

"My dear, I have read long enough," she said; "suppose you close the shutters—if Perry Bristol has gone."

Perry Bristol is the Motive.

TELEGRAM FROM ROMAN DARRELL TO MISS DELGWYNN

May I go down on Saturday? R. D.

TELEGRAM FROM MISS DELGWYNN TO ROMAN DARRELL

Certainly; but not deep enough here.

L. D.

THE RED BOOK. SEPTEMBER 5

Down in the woods to-day, I had so strange an impression! It was that of being watched over by the trees — protected, cared for with fatherliness.

I never take book or pencil there now. I lie beneath them and become a part of the dream; a part of the wonderful, silent life that never ceases, but moves in so slow a current that mortal cannot see it. I cannot work now on the book, although I wish to do so more than anything in the world; yes, more than anything. Yet, something disturbs and prevents me.

THE RED BOOK. SEPTEMBER 6 "'Tis said that laughs were heard within the wood.''

"Any man in his senses would have known he was not to come," I said. I sat in the hammock near the water, where the pine-trees grow down from the ridge, and Darrell stood looking disconsolately upon me, hands in his pockets.

"I do not claim to be in mine, at present," he said, doggedly. "My telegram was simple enough for a

child to read."

"Oh, a child! Children read everything. Maeterlinck and Mill are a, b, c, to them! Your wire was rather tragic. I inferred that you were weary of tears and of laughter, and of self-preservation in all its forms, and contemplated an early death by drowning. I discouraged the attempt being made here, because the bay, like most of us, is not so deep as it looks."

"Will you stop trifling!" said Darrell, with sudden and refreshing inelegance. It was a dash of cold water in the face. I attempted to speak, but laughed, rather forlornly; my voice was not steady, and he made a rush for the hammock. I heard him mutter something expressive, but by that time I was down the

bank.

"You are very instantaneous! How

dare you!"

"I dare anything!" said he, standing before me. "I love you, love

you, love--!"

"There, that will answer," I interrupted. "I shall sit under this tree, and you may explain your abruptness."

"There's nothing to explain," he said, with a take-it-or-leave-it tone, and threw himself moodily on the

pine-needles.

"You do not sound self-congratulatory, at any rate. Has the girl at

the hotel——?"

He muttered an expletive, and threw twigs in the water. "You knew it—you knew it the night you talked about truth-telling to me!"

"I didn't!" I retorted, inelegantly; "at least, never until then, and I thought I must be mistaken.'

"Then, forGod's sake, why didn't you let me alone?" he said, fiercely. "No, I don't mean that, either, Lenore; you know I don't!"

"Yes, I might have said, 'Mr. Darrell, upon the supposition that you are too susceptible to be exposed to my charms, I will strike your name from my list.' It would have sounded rather egotistical, and you would have been furiously angry."

I paused, and he plucked vindictively at the pine-needles. There came a silence, which the voice refused to break. Suddenly, he caught my dress, and looked up with plead-

"Say something, Lenore — anything! Tell me you did not know it—know that I loved you last Winter—this Spring—always, dear!"

"No! no! Indeed, I did not! You were so different—so indifferent! I mean, you are quite changed now. You seemed so absorbed in those

articles you were writing."

He threw his hand across his eyes, and laughed, sharply. "Different! I write nothing, think nothing, do nothing, that has not you back of it. I live for the time that brings me nearer to you. What is work by comparison with this?" He bent and kissed my hand before I could stop him.

"Oh, please do not say it," I whispered; "it once was stronger than any-

thing else!"

"All my preconceived notions about Art, you turned upside down when you sat on the step in the moonlight, and talked profane platitudes about artists marrying."

"I meant it," I said, gently; "I meant myself all the time, and I mean

it now."

"And I mean something else—I

mean to marry you!"

For a second, my hands flew to my eyes. I did not wish to look at him. I longed for the strength of the tree against which I leaned. "No!" I murmured; "no!"

"What do you expect me to do, Lenore?" he said; "to adore you, worship the thought of you, and to marry

some one else, perhaps?"

"It has been done," I retorted, recovering, "and it worked very well. Plenty of people have married some one else. I have told you, repeatedly, that I am not fitted for matrimony."

"No woman is until she tries it. It is an experiment. Oh, hang such banalties!" He seized my hand. "Look at your little pink hand. What is it made for? Look at your

eves---"

"A physical impossibility, my dear Darrell," said I. "If you really wish me to take you seriously——"

"Take me any way at all," he in-

terpolated.

"—seriously—" I contemplated him from where I sat under the tree, holding in leash the tenderness which stirred me—"if you really wish me to believe that you have been posing, until recently—"

"I suppose you intend to marry that fool, Perry Bristol! He has mil-

lions."

My expression brought him back to full consciousness, like ammonia at the nostrils.

"Then, you shall marry me!" he added.

"I wish you would go away," I said, with sudden weakness; "go forever, and let me alone!"

"Look at me, and tell me so!" he de-

manded.

I tried to, I did try to, but something— Oh, the pitiful woman-nature that makes it so easy to be loved! "No! no! I did not mean it!" I gasped.

"You did! I swear it!" He was on his knees now. "Your eyes told

me!"

"I do not! I will not marry any one!" I cried, springing up, as Jeanne's breathless voice came flying down the path.

"Mam'selle! mam'selle! Où est mam'selle? Madame elle dit à moi—le monsieur Breestol est chez nous!" THE RED BOOK. SEPTEMBER 7

"For some god speaks from within."

To-day, the world is perfection. Creation has touched its triumphant chord. I have been in the woods, alone—where one knows not loneliness. Once within the spell of it, the trite measurements of the world fall from me. The mask fades from the little that feigns to be great, and I see the simplicity of the primeval elements. One takes on layer after layer of the world as the rock acquires its scales.

In the midst of the thrilling, sacred silence, the mystery of unuttered promise, the hiding-places of Nature's secret rites, the suggestion of unfathomable mystery, it is easy to believe in a Spirit of things. One could not but have had faith, once, in the dryads. I saw them to-day, wrought of light, shadow and gnarled bark, peering outward with writhing arms; laughing mockingly at the human pigmy beneath them; looking out with the supreme wisdom of centuries upon the small, struggling, striving, sordid world.

It is an enchantment which heals, a wonder that only Wizard Nature can work. Lying on the warm earth, the strong arms stretched over me, I knew, beyond the power of little moods, and the impulse of will, that something had taught me aright.

THE RED BOOK. SEPTEMBER 8

"Why did you come? I was so

happy this afternoon!"

It was moonlight, and I had slipped down to the hammock by a side path, when the Motive began to grow out of the darkness. Aunt Susannah would inevitably chain him for awhile.

Darrell came from among the trees

as I approached.

"I thought you had gone. You have a ghoulish way of haunting me, lately. You have completely changed. Please stand there, and if you see a white duck—"

"Is it an evil omen?" he asked.

"Don't be rude—a white-duck man

coming down the path, tell me, and I'll disappear."

"And I?" said Darrell.

"Oh, well, you might tell him I've gone eel-catching by moonlight. He has a horror of women who do anything but wrap themselves in shawls, and knit things. We scoff at the limitations of Eastern women, at their luxurious idleness, their sherbet-drinking, petty gossiping, domino-playing—at least, that is the description; but I see no great advance on our side, in the Summer-resort life. What have they done up at the hotel all day?"

"Rocked, knit, talked, played cards, and drunk cocktails," said Darrell. "I

wish you would talk to me."

"What am I doing?"

"Swaying in a hammock, like the picture of the young person perched on the new moon, and trying to prevent my speaking seriously to you."

"You are more like yourself to-night, so I will tell you something. No, not that!" for he started forward. "Sit down. I discovered, to-day, that when a man cares—cares for——"

"Loves!" he interpolated.

"Loves a woman, he really thinks it a sort of debt placed upon her. He thinks she should love him. You you sound like it when you speak."

"I hope that I have some sort of

humility," he said, proudly.

"You may have, but not that sort. You cannot help it. I believe that the majority of you make the average woman love you. There, now!" I drew a breath of relief at getting it out. "I mean that, if you only told us so, and let us alone to decide according to our own instinct, there would be fewer of us unhappy afterward!"

"You must be serious, for you are rather ungrammatical," said Dar-

rell.

"I promised to speak only truly to you, and I have done so; yet, you have not believed me. I cannot marry you. I was sure of it to-day in the woods. I must belong to myself. There is something that will not let me go; and, if you—if you make me give myself up, I shall be miserable!"

He came to my side. "Look at me, Lenore. Can I make you love me?"

I was tempted to say, "No."

"I—suppose so," I murmured. He was on his knees beside me now. "But oh, please believe me; it cannot alter what I have said. I only say that I suppose so."

"I can! I will!" he muttered.

"You shall not!" I exclaimed; "I do not wish to feel keenly—it hurts me so—you cannot understand. I love life so differently; it takes such tiny things to make me happy, and so little to make me unhappy. I love it all so—each blade of grass, each pebble, each shadow in the woods. Oh, the woods are the heart of me! I must have it in my own way, the solitude——"

"Foolish child!" he said, with a laugh; "I do not wish you to give it up.

You shall live it two-fold!"

"No, no!" I sprang up and stood with an arm thrown around the tree where the hammock swung. Something was yielding within me. "No; a man cannot understand! I should not be the supreme owner of myself; I must have freedom, or die! Oh, I fear that I should not die!"

"Lenore, you love me!" he exclaimed, suddenly, striding across the moonswept space between us. The touch of the rough bark was that of

strength.

"Not in that way!" I pleaded. "Oh, please—" I leaned against the tree, and, suddenly, there were tears upon my face. I heard his deep exclamation. Then, I freed myself from him, and fled up the path and into my little room.

THE RED BOOK. MIDNIGHT

How can any one think tears a relief, a luxury? I hate them! They uproot and whirl me on their torrent as when a tree is torn by storm. They leave me weak for human support.

Oh, to be out among the trees that are writhing with wind, rent with storm, beaten by rain—the wind and rain that defy and create strength! Of that I am not afraid; but of this——!

I suffer and grow weak. If I see him again, I shall yield.

But I will not! I will not!

SEPTEMBER 8. SUNRISE
TELEGRAM FROM MISS DELGWYNN TO
MRS. WINTER

Wire me to come. Do not delay. Lenore.

TELEGRAM FROM MRS. WINTER TO MISS DELGWYNN

Can you come at once? Emergency. Lucia.

SEPTEMBER 8. NOON

SPECIAL-DELIVERY LETTER FROM MISS DELGWYNN TO MRS. WINTER

I left your telegram for Aunt Susannah, and started before she was up. As Mrs. Vorneck arrives to-day, she does not need me—she never does. Lucia, I have come away; I mean forever. I have always unconsciously anticipated the time when I should. The hard part is to do the things one dreams about. I shall write to Aunt Susannah as soon as I am settled and at work. In the meantime, please do not tell her that I am not with you.

Even you, whom I love, cannot understand. If I had stayed, I should have yielded. It would be easy to, and I do not wish to yield. I shall not tell you where I am going, lest he discover it, inadvertently. You must try to believe me; I cannot marry him. Please do not look for me, for a little while Freedom is like a huge wave that bears me up and on.

Your Lenore.

TO ROMAN DARRELL. SEPTEMBER 8

You must try to believe that I have spoken the truth to you. I do not wish to marry you; yet, please do not think me very ungracious. I wish to write the book. I care more for it than for anything in the world—yes, anything.

L. D.

FROM ROMAN DARRELL TO MRS. WINTER. SEPTEMBER 9

Please advise me by wire. Shall we go together? Shall I take Bitts, of the private force? He is very discreet.

He will find her in twelve hours. Do not delay. She is alone.

R. D.

TELEGRAM FROM MRS. WINTER TO ROMAN DARRELL

Do nothing until I see you. Have had letter.

L. W.

FROM MRS. SUSANNAH DELGWYNN TO MRS. WINTER

THE WAYSIDE, COVE ISLAND.
OCTOBER 30

MY DEAR MRS. WINTER:

You may imagine how I felt when I learned that Lenore was not with you, after all. Then her letter came with the list of things she wanted. I really cannot conceive such an indiscreet idea originating with one who has led so sheltered a life; for, as you know, Lenore has scarcely been beyond my door unchaperoned! It seems that she is overwhelmed with desire to write and paint—as if she has not had ample time for both when sitting with me! She says she has already secured orders by exhibiting her little pictures. This seems very aggressive and altogether unnecessary, when she has had a comfortable home with me, and has the advantage of going everywhere with Indeed, such independence is scarcely ladylike. I have not confided to Perry Bristol that she is not with you. He is so elegant in all his tastes! You know he is worth millions, and has been quite devoted to Lenore. But she, as usual, ignored all sense of duty concerning such a match. It is a great disappointment to me, after all my effort. I believe that Lenore has taken a studio. Fancy! Do you really think that she will have her name on a sign? I sincerely hope not. Our dear Mrs. Vorneck is even more shocked than I. Her sensibilities are so delicate! She will remain with me indefinitely.

I hope that you will encourage Lenore to give up this foolish idea. She has so little regard for appearances!

Cordially yours,
SUSANNAH DELGWYNN.
P. S.—We return to the city in a few

days. This is the most crude and desolate spot imaginable. Mr. Bristol has closed his villa for the season.

S. D.

THE RED BOOK. NOVEMBER I
"The light which never Wintry blast blows
out."

I have written three chapters to-

day. It has made me so happy! A letter from dear Lucia, too. She will come on to see me next month. I am too sleepy to write to-night, and have a sitting early in the morning. It is delightful to decorate the studio, little by little. When it is all done, I want Aunt Susannah to see it.



LES PERLES

D ANS le Golfe Persique et près de Taprobane, Aux bords d'Acarnanie et de Coromandel, Des milliers de pêcheurs désertant leur cabane S'immergent sous les flots en un danger mortel.

Une pierre, à leur col, les force de descendre, Ils plongent sous les eaux des instants infinis, Puis remontent, portant le bijou le plus tendre, La coquille où la perle oriente ses nids.

Mais leur vie a tôt fait de céder à ces joutes;
Un requin les dévore, ils sont asphyxiés
Le sang fuit par leurs yeux, et leurs humides routes,
Se sillonnent de pourpre— Et c'est extasiés

Qu'ils meurent, l'œil fixé sur l'invisible proie Qui doit aller parer dans les pays lointains De ses feux irisés, la Beauté qui les broie Et par qui leurs printemps sont, en une heure, éteints.

O Femme! Hélène encore en quête de parures, De quel plus pur joyau veux-tu te couronner Que du dernier soupir de tant de créatures, Ces tristes pêcheurs morts pour te vouloir orner?

Et je songe parfois, en nos mornes soirées, Que là-bas le pêcheur mystérieux descend Apprêter les colliers des épaules moirées, Dont le lait de leur perle a coûté tant de sang! Le Comte Robert de Montesquiou.



A TERRIBLE TEMPTATION

MARJORIE—I want to hear what he says when he foozles.

A SONG'S ECHO

MY Love is the Winter rose
That sweetly blooms alone—
That has of rivals none, and knows
A beauty all her own.

My Love is like a tender tune
That wakens tender words—
That fills December full of June,
And brings again the birds.

Her smile, my sun, her voice, my song, Her face, my flower of bliss; Oh, who could find the Winter long With such a Love as this!

Julian Durand.



FROM A POPULAR NOVEL

''What is?" inquired the benevolent old gentleman, as he passed.
"The letter 'V," she cried.

Far up the street, a pin was heard to fall with a dull, sickening thud; then all was still.



SCARED

ESTELLE—Jessica was terribly frightened, I hear, and only one thing prevented her teeth chattering.

MAY—What was that?

ESTELLE—They were on her dresser.



MRS. CATTERSON—Wouldn't your guests stay any longer at your houseparty?
MRS. HATTERSON—Oh, yes; but my servants wouldn't.
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HIS HIDEOUS HULLABALLOO

THE worm—" almost defiantly began the stoopy-shouldered, wanhaired husband of a certain hawk-billed, majestic woman—and, in view of the fact that she was a reformer, and her husband was upon this occasion talking as much as he wished, it is hardly needful to explain that she was absent at the time—"the worm—I am, of course, not—er—h'm!—exactly a worm, but—well, even I will turn, when driven to desperation. It takes a good deal to start me, for the reason that I—er—er—we have been married nearly eighteen years now, and—but you have met my wife. Anyhow, though, when the time comes, I turn!

"Last Wednesday afternoon, my wife read a paper at a convention, or, perhaps, I should say conclave—she reads very effectively, too, not to say sonorously; she is blessed with a deep, resonant voice, which seems to sattle it when she says a thing. It was one of the several organizations to which she belongs, or gives her time to, to be exact—a club or convocation of ladies, all of whom are the possessors of deep voices and husbands, or else are single and skinny—I mean, intellectual—as hornets. I do not know the title of the paper, for I found only a part of the rough draft of it, while I was in the midst of my household duties, after she had gone; but I could guess at the modus operandi, so to say, or method, of the whole of it, from the portions, or extracts, which came under my notice. Among them were the following:

"'An idle husband is the devil's workshop."

"The average husband eats his cabbage and uses it for a head, too."

"A husband, a hound and a hickory tree—the more you abuse them the better they'll be."

"'A husband is like a lobster—he must be kept in hot water to make him shell out properly.'

"Man was made to mourn; see that he does so. He wants but little here below; be careful that he gets it."

"The quickest way to get the average husband into anything intellectual

or improving is to blindfold him and back him in.'

There were others, but those were sufficient to infuriate me. When I beheld—when I read—sir, I was enraged! At first, I was tempted to seize a pillow, and wreak such vengeance upon my wife as Othello wreaked upon Desdemona, immediately upon her return—yes, immediately! But, happily, I thought better of it; and I rushed down, and rang the door-bell, till I was almost exhausted, and much calmer—after, of course, first muffling the bell carefully; for you know how one's neighbors will talk, if they get a chance, and my wife might have heard of it through them."



WHEREIN THE DANGER LAY

"No; not so long as you don't let her select the play."